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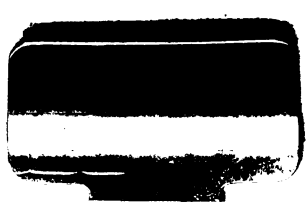
"Mais j'y suis, et, mes bons camarades, par tous les dieux, j'y reste!"

CHARLES K. JOHNSTON.



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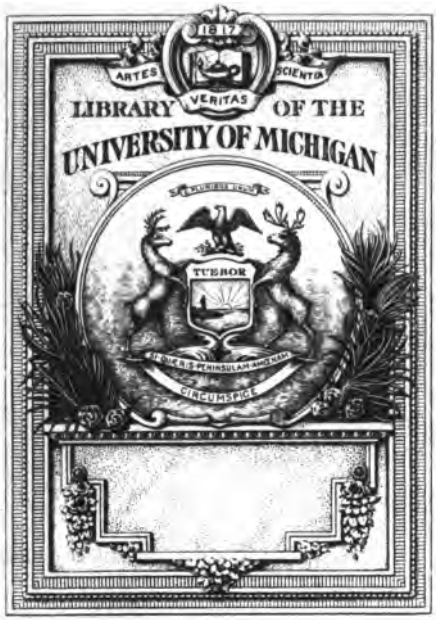

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Flaubert, Gustave

The Lady Elliott one, weary as I,
Thou frailly shalt seek some precipice
from which to cast thyself.

Flaubert, Gustave
[Works] v.10

BOUVARD AND PÉCUCHET

A TRAGI-COMIC NOVEL OF BOURGEOIS LIFE

BY

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

VOLUME II.

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BOUVARD AND PÉCUCHET

(CONTINUED.)

CHAPTER IX.

SONS OF THE CHURCH.

MARCEL reappeared next day at three o'clock, his face green, his eyes bloodshot, a lump on his forehead, his breeches torn, his breath tainted with a strong smell of brandy, and his person covered with dirt.

He had been, according to an annual custom of his, six leagues away at Iqueville to enjoy a midnight repast with a friend; and, stuttering more than ever, crying, wishing to beat himself, he begged of them for pardon, as if he had committed a crime. His masters granted it to him. A singular feeling of serenity rendered them indulgent.

The snow had suddenly melted, and they walked about the garden, inhaling the genial air, delighted merely with living.

Was it only chance that had kept them from death? Bouvard felt deeply affected. Pécuchet re-

called his first commission, and, full of gratitude to the Force, the Cause, on which they depended, the idea took possession of them to read pious works.

The Gospel dilated their souls, dazzled them like a sun. They perceived Jesus standing on a mountain, with one arm raised, while below the multitude listened to Him; or else on the margin of a lake in the midst of the apostles, while they drew in their nets; next on the ass, in the clamour of the "alleluias," His hair fanned by the quivering palms; finally, lifted high upon the Cross, bending down His head, from which eternally falls a dew of blood upon the world. What won them, what ravished them, was His tenderness for the humble, His defence of the poor, His exaltation of the oppressed; and they found in that Book, wherein Heaven unfolds itself, nothing theological in the midst of so many precepts, no dogma, no requirement, save purity of heart.

As for the miracles, their reason was not astonished by them. They had been acquainted with them from their childhood. The loftiness of St. John enchanted Pécuchet, and better disposed him to appreciate the *Imitation*.

Here were no more parables, flowers, birds, but lamentations—a compression of the soul into itself.

Bouvard grew sad as he turned over these pages, which seemed to have been written in foggy weather, in the depths of a cloister, between a belfry and a tomb. Our mortal life appeared there so wretched that one must needs forget it and return to God. And the two poor men, after all their disappointments, experienced that need of simple natures—to love something, to find rest for their souls.

They studied *Ecclesiastes, Isaiah, Jeremiah*.

But the Bible dismayed them with its lion-voiced prophets, the crashing of thunder in the skies, all the sobbings of Gehenna, and its God scattering empires as the wind scatters clouds.

They read it on Sunday at the hour of vespers, while the bell was ringing.

One day they went to mass, and then came back. It was a kind of recreation at the end of the week. The Count and Countess de Faverges bowed to them from the distance, a circumstance which was remarked. The justice of the peace said to them with blinking eyes:

"Excellent! You have my approval."

All the village dames now sent them consecrated bread. The Abbé Jeufroy paid them a visit; they returned it; friendly intercourse followed; and the priest avoided talking about religion.

They were astonished at this reserve, so much so that Pécuchet, with an assumption of indifference, asked him what was the way to set about obtaining faith.

"Practise first of all."

They began to practise, the one with hope, the other with defiance, Bouvard being convinced that he would never be a devotee. For a month he regularly followed all the services; but, unlike Pécuchet, he did not wish to subject himself to Lenten fare.

Was this a hygienic measure? We know what hygiene is worth. A matter of the proprieties? Down with the proprieties! A mark of submission towards the Church? He laughed at it just as much; in short, he declared the rule absurd, pharisaical, and contrary to the spirit of the Gospel.

On Good Friday in other years they used to eat whatever Germaine served up to them. But on this

occasion Bouvard ordered a beefsteak. He sat down and cut up the meat, and Marcel, scandalised, kept staring at him, while Pécuchet gravely took the skin off his slice of codfish.

Bouvard remained with his fork in one hand, his knife in the other. At length, making up his mind, he raised a mouthful to his lips. All at once his hands began to tremble, his heavy countenance grew pale, his head fell back.

"Are you ill?"

"No. But——" And he made an avowal. In consequence of his education (it was stronger than himself), he could not eat meat on this day for fear of dying.

Pécuchet, without misusing his victory, took advantage of it to live in his own fashion. One evening he returned home with a look of sober joy imprinted on his face, and, letting the word escape, said that he had just been at confession.

Thereupon they argued about the importance of confession.

Bouvard acknowledged that of the early Christians, which was made publicly: the modern is too easy. However, he did not deny that this examination concerning ourselves might be an element of progress, a leaven of morality.

Pécuchet, desirous of perfection, searched for his vices: for some time past the puffings of pride were gone. His taste for work freed him from idleness; as for gluttony, nobody was more moderate. Sometimes he was carried away by anger.

He made a vow that he would be so no more.

In the next place, it would be necessary to acquire the virtues: first of all, humility, that is to say, to believe yourself incapable of any merit, unworthy of the

least recompense, to immolate your spirit, and to place yourself so low that people may trample you under their feet like the mud of the roads. He was far as yet from these dispositions.

Another virtue was wanting in him—chastity. For inwardly he regretted Mélie, and the pastel of the lady in the Louis XV. dress disturbed him by her ample display of bosom. He shut it up in a cupboard, and redoubled his modesty, so much so that he feared to cast glances at his own person.

In order to mortify himself, Pécuchet gave up his little glass after meals, confined himself to four pinches of snuff in the day, and even in the coldest weather he did not any longer put on his cap.

One day, Bouvard, who was fastening up the vine, placed a ladder against the wall of the terrace near the house, and, without intending it, found himself landed in Pécuchet's room.

His friend, naked up to the middle, first gently smacked his shoulders with the cat-o'-nine-tails without quite undressing; then, getting animated, pulled off his shirt, lashed his back, and sank breathless on a chair.

Bouvard was troubled, as if at the unveiling of a mystery on which he should not have gazed.

For some time he had noticed a greater cleanliness about the floor, fewer holes in the napkins, and an improvement in the diet—changes which were due to the intervention of Reine, the curé's housekeeper. Mixing up the affairs of the Church with those of her kitchen, strong as a ploughman, and devoted though disrespectful, she gained admittance into households, gave advice, and became mistress in them. Pécuchet placed implicit confidence in her experience.

On one occasion she brought to him a corpulent man with narrow eyes like a Chinaman, and a nose like a vulture's beak. This was M. Gouttman, a dealer in pious articles. He unpacked some of them shut up in boxes under the cart-shed: a cross, medals, and beads of all sizes; candelabra for oratories, portable altars, tinsel bouquets, and sacred hearts of blue pasteboard, St. Josephs with red beards, and porcelain crucifixes. The price alone stood in his way.

Gouttman did not ask for money. He preferred barterings; and, having gone up to the museum, he offered a number of his wares for their collection of old iron and lead.

They appeared hideous to Bouvard. But Pécuchet's glance, the persistency of Reine, and the bluster of the dealer were effectual in making him yield.

Gouttman, seeing him so accommodating, wanted the halberd in addition; Bouvard, tired of having exhibited its working, surrendered it. The entire valuation was made. "These gentlemen still owed a hundred francs." It was settled by three bills payable at three months; and they congratulated themselves on a good bargain.

Their acquisitions were distributed through the various rooms. A crib filled with hay and a cork cathedral decorated the museum.

On Pécuchet's chimney-piece there was a St. John the Baptist in wax; along the corridor were ranged the portraits of episcopal dignitaries; and at the bottom of the staircase, under a chained lamp, stood a Blessed Virgin in an azure mantle and a crown of stars. Marcel cleaned up those splendours, unable to imagine anything more beautiful in Paradise.

What a pity that the St. Peter was broken, and how nicely it would have done in the vestibule!

Pécuchet stopped sometimes before the old pit for composts, where he discovered the tiara, one sandal, and the tip of an ear; allowed sighs to escape him, then went on gardening, for now he combined manual labour with religious exercises, and dug the soil attired in the monk's habit, comparing himself to Bruno. This disguise might be a sacrilege. He gave it up.

But he assumed the ecclesiastical style, no doubt owing to his intimacy with the curé. He had the same smile, the same tone of voice, and, like the priest too, he slipped both hands with a chilly air into his sleeves up to the wrists. A day came when he was pestered by the crowing of the cock and disgusted with the roses; he no longer went out, or only cast sullen glances over the fields.

Bouvard suffered himself to be led to the May devotions. The children singing hymns, the gorgeous display of lilacs, the festoons of verdure, had imparted to him, so to speak, a feeling of imperishable youth. God manifested Himself to his heart through the fashioning of nests, the transparency of fountains, the bounty of the sun; and his friend's devotion appeared to him extravagant, fastidious.

"Why do you groan during mealtime?"

"We ought to eat with groans," returned Pécuchet, "for it was in that way that man lost his innocence"—a phrase which he had read in the *Seminarist's Manual,* two duodecimo volumes he had borrowed from M. Jeufroy: and he drank some of the water of La Salette, gave himself up with closed doors to ejaculatory prayers, and aspired to join the confraternity of St. Francis.

In order to obtain the gift of perseverance, he resolved to make a pilgrimage in honour of the Blessed Virgin. He was perplexed as to the choice of a locality. Should it be Nôtre Dame de Fourviers, de Chartres, d'Embrun, de Marseille, or d'Auray? Nôtre Dame de la Délivrande was nearer, and it suited just as well.

"You will accompany me?"

"I should look like a greenhorn," said Bouvard.

After all, he might come back a believer; he did not object to being one; and so he yielded through complaisance.

Pilgrimages ought to be made on foot. But forty-three kilometers would be trying; and the public conveyances not being adapted for meditation, they hired an old cabriolet, which, after a twelve hours' journey, set them down before the inn.

They got an apartment with two beds and two chests of drawers, supporting two water-jugs in little oval basins; and "mine host" informed them that this was "the chamber of the Capuchins" under the Terror. There La Dame de la Délivrande had been concealed with so much precaution that the good fathers said mass there clandestinely.

This gave Pécuchet pleasure, and he read aloud a sketch of the history of the chapel, which had been taken downstairs into the kitchen.

It had been founded in the beginning of the second century by St. Régnobert, first bishop of Lisieux, or by St. Ragnebert, who lived in the seventh, or by Robert the Magnificent in the middle of the eleventh.

The Danes, the Normans, and, above all, the Protestants, had burnt and ravaged it at various epochs.

About 1112, the original statue was discovered by a sheep, which indicated the place where it was by tapping with its foot in a field of grass; and on this spot Count Baudouin erected a sanctury.

"'Her miracles are innumerable. A merchant of Bayeux, taken captive by the Saracens, invoked her: his fetters fell off, and he escaped. A miser found a nest of rats in his corn loft, appealed to her aid, and the rats went away. The touch of a medal, which had been rubbed over her effigy, caused an old materialist from Versailles to repent on his death-bed. She gave back speech to Sieur Adeline, who lost it for having blasphemed; and by her protection, M. and Madame de Becqueville had sufficient strength to live chastely in the married state.

"'Amongst those whom she cured of irremediable diseases are mentioned Mademoiselle de Palfresne, Anne Lirieux, Marie Duchemin, François Dufai, and Madame de Jumillac *née* d'Osseville.

"'Persons of high rank have visited her: Louis XI., Louis XIII., two daughters of Gaston of Orléans, Cardinal Wiseman, Samirrhi, patriarch of Antioch, Monseigneur Véroles, vicar apostolic of Manchuria; and the Archbishop of Quelen came to return thanks to her for the conversion of Prince Talleyrand.'"

"She might," said Pécuchet, "convert you also!"

Bouvard, already in bed, gave vent to a species of grunt, and presently was fast asleep.

Next morning at six o'clock they entered the chapel.

Another was in course of construction. Canvas and boards blocked up the nave; and the monument, in a rococo style, displeased Bouvard, above all, the altar of red marble with its Corinthian pilasters.

The miraculous statue, in a niche at the left of the choir, was enveloped in a spangled robe. The beadle came up with a wax taper for each of them. He fixed it in a kind of candlestick overlooking the balustrade, asked for three francs, made a bow, and disappeared.

Then they surveyed the votive offerings. Inscriptions on slabs bore testimony to the gratitude of the faithful. They admired two swords in the form of a cross presented by a pupil of the Polytechnic School, brides' bouquets, military medals, silver hearts, and in the corner, along the floor, a forest of crutches.

A priest passed out of the sacristy carrying the holy pyx.

When he had remained for a few minutes at the bottom of the altar, he ascended the three steps, said the *Oremus,* the *Introit,* and the *Kyrie,* which the boy who served mass recited all in one breath on bended knees.

The number present was small—a dozen or fifteen old women. The rattling of their beads could be heard accompanying the noise of a hammer driving in stones. Pécuchet bent over his prie-dieu and responded to the "Amens." During the elevation, he implored Our Lady to send him a constant and indestructible faith. Bouvard, in a chair beside him, took up his Euchology, and stopped at the litany of the Blessed Virgin.

"Most pure, most chaste, most venerable, most amiable, most powerful—Tower of ivory—House of gold—Gate of the morning."

These words of adoration, these hyperboles drew him towards the being who has been the object of so

much reverence. He dreamed of her as she is represented in church paintings, above a mass of clouds, cherubims at her feet, the Infant Jesus on her breast—Mother of tendernesses, upon whom all the sorrows of the earth have a claim—ideal of woman carried up to heaven; for man exalts that love arising out of the depths of the soul, and his highest aspiration is to rest upon her heart.

The mass was finished. They passed along by the dealers' sheds which lined the walls in front of the church. They saw there images, holy-water basins, urns with fillets of gold, Jesus Christs made of cocoanuts, and ivory chaplets; and the sun brought into prominence the rudeness of the paintings, the hideousness of the drawings. Bouvard, who had some abominable specimens at his own residence, was indulgent towards these. He bought a little Virgin of blue paste. Pécuchet contented himself with a rosary as a memento.

The dealers called out: "Come on! come on! For five francs, for three francs, for sixty centimes, for two sous, don't refuse Our Lady!"

The two pilgrims sauntered about without making any selections from the proffered wares. Uncomplimentary remarks were made about them.

"What is it they want, these creatures?"

"Perhaps they are Turks."

"Protestants, rather."

A big girl dragged Pécuchet by the frock-coat; an old man in spectacles placed a hand on his shoulder; all were bawling at the same time; and a number of them left their sheds, and, surrounding the pair, redoubled their solicitations and effronteries.

Bouvard could not stand this any longer.

"Let us alone, for God's sake!"

The crowd dispersed. But one fat woman followed them for some distance, and exclaimed that they would repent of it.

When they got back to the inn they found Gouttman in the café. His business called him to these quarters, and he was talking to a man who was examining accounts at a table.

This person had a leather cap, a very wide pair of trousers, a red complexion, and a good figure in spite of his white hair: he had the appearance at the same time of a retired officer and an old strolling player.

From time to time he rapped out an oath; then, when Gouttman replied in a mild tone, he calmed down at once and passed to another part of the accounts.

Bouvard who had been closely watching him, at the end of a quarter of an hour came up to his side.

"Barberou, I believe?"

"Bouvard!" exclaimed the man in the cap, and they embraced each other.

Barberou had in the course of twenty years experienced many changes of fortune. He had been editor of a newspaper, an insurance agent, and manager of an oyster-bed.

"I will tell you all about it," he said.

At last, having returned to his original calling, he was travelling for a Bordeaux house, and Gouttman, who took care of the diocese, disposed of wines for him to the ecclesiastics. "But," he hurriedly added, "you must pardon me one minute; then I shall be at your service."

He was proceeding with the examination of the accounts, and all of a sudden he jumped up excitedly.

"What! two thousand?"

"Certainly."

"Ha! it's wrong, that's what it is!"

"What do you say?"

"I say that I've seen Hérambert myself," replied Barberou in a passion. "The invoice makes it four thousand. No humbug!"

The dealer was not put out of countenance.

"Well, it discharges you—what next?"

Barberou, as he stood there with his face at first pale and then purple, impressed Bouvard and Pécuchet with the apprehension that he was about to strangle Gouttman.

He sat down, folded his arms, and said:

"You are a vile rascal, you must admit."

"No insults, Monsieur Barberou. There are witnesses. Be careful!"

"I'll bring an action against you!"

"Ta! ta! ta!" Then having fastened together his books, Gouttman lifted the brim of his hat: "I wish you luck on't!" With these words he went off.

Barberou explained the facts: For a credit of a thousand francs doubled by a succession of renewals with interest, he had delivered to Gouttman three thousand francs' worth of wines. This would pay his debt with a profit of a thousand francs; but, on the contrary, he owed three thousand on the transaction! His employers might dismiss him; they might even prosecute him!

"Blackguard! robber! dirty Jew! And this fellow dines at priests' houses! Besides, everything that touches the clerical headpiece——"

And he went on railing against the priests, and he struck the table with such violence that the little statue was near falling.

"Gently!" said Bouvard.

"Hold on! What's this here?" And Barberou having removed the covering of the little Virgin: "A pilgrimage bauble! Yours?"

"'Tis mine," said Pécuchet.

"You grieve me," returned Barberou; "but I'll give you a wrinkle on that point. Don't be afraid." And as one must be a philosopher, and as there is no use in fretting, he invited them to come and lunch with him.

The three sat down together at table.

Barberou was agreeable, recalled old times, took hold of the maid-servant's waist, and wished to measure the breadth of Bouvard's stomach. He would soon see them again, and would bring them a droll book.

The idea of his visit was rather pleasant to them. They chatted about it in the omnibus for an hour, while the horse was trotting. Then Pécuchet shut his eyes. Bouvard also relapsed into silence. Internally he felt an inclination towards religion.

"M. Marescot had the day before called to make an important communication" — Marcel knew no more about it.

They did not see the notary till three days after; and at once he explained the matter.

Madame Bordin offered to buy the farm from M. Bouvard, and to pay him seven thousand five hundred francs a year.

She had been casting sheep's eyes on it since her youth, knew the boundaries and lands all around it, its defects and its advantages; and this desire consumed her like a cancer.

For the good lady, like a true Norman, cherished above everything landed estate, less for the security

of the capital than for the happiness of treading on soil that belonged to herself. In that hope she had devoted herself to inquiries and inspections from day to day, and had practised prolonged economies; and she waited with impatience for Bouvard's answer.

He was perplexed, not desiring that Pécuchet one day should be fortuneless; but it was necessary to seize the opportunity—which was the result of the pilgrimage, for the second time Providence had shown itself favourable to them. They proposed the following conditions: An annual payment, not of seven thousand five hundred francs, but of six thousand francs, provided it should pass to the survivor.

Marescot made the point that one of them was in delicate health. The constitution of the other gave him an apoplectic tendency. Madame Bordin, carried away by her ruling passion, signed the contract.

Bouvard got into a melancholy frame of mind about it. Somebody might desire his death; and this reflection inspired him with serious thoughts, ideas about God and eternity.

Three days after, M. Jeufroy invited them to the annual dinner which it was his custom to give to his colleagues. The dinner began at two o'clock in the afternoon, and was to finish at eleven at night.

Perry was used at it as a beverage, and puns were circulated. The Abbé Pruneau, before they broke up, composed an acrostic; M. Bougon performed card-tricks; and Cerpet, a young curate, sang a little ballad which bordered on gallantry.

The curé frequently came to see them. He presented religion under graceful colours. And, after all, what risk would they run? So Bouvard expressed his willingness to approach the holy table shortly,

and Pécuchet was to participate in the sacrament on the same occasion.

The great day arrived. The church, on account of the first communions, was thronged with worshippers. The village shopkeepers and their womenfolk were crowded close together in their seats, and the common people either remained standing up behind or occupied the gallery over the church door.

What was about to take place was inexplicable—so Bouvard reflected; but reason does not suffice for the comprehension of certain things. Great men have admitted that. Let him do as much as they had done; and so, in a kind of torpor, he contemplated the altar, the censer, the tapers, with his head a little light, for he had eaten nothing, and experienced a singular weakness.

Pécuchet, by meditating on the Passion of Jesus Christ, excited himself to outbursts of love. He would have liked to offer his soul up to Him as well as the souls of others—and the ecstasies, the transports, the illumination of the saints, all beings, the entire universe. Though he prayed with fervour, the different parts of the mass seemed to him a little long.

At length the little boys knelt down on the first step of the altar, forming with their coats a black band, above which rose light or dark heads of hair at unequal elevations. Then the little girls took their places, with their veils falling from beneath their wreaths. From a distance they resembled a row of white clouds at the end of the choir.

Then it was the turn of the great personages.

The first on the gospel-side was Pécuchet; but, too much moved, no doubt, he kept swaying his head right and left. The curé found difficulty in

putting the host into his mouth, and as he received it he turned up the whites of his eyes.

Bouvard, on the contrary, opened his jaws so widely, that his tongue hung over his lip like a streamer. On rising he jostled against Madame Bordin. Their eyes met. She smiled; without knowing the reason why, he reddened.

After Madame Bordin, Mademoiselle de Faverges, the countess, their lady companion, and a gentleman who was not known at Chavignolles approached the altar in a body.

The last two were Placquevent and Petit, the schoolmaster, and then, all of a sudden, Gorju made his appearance. He had got rid of the tuft on his chin; and, as he went back to his place, he had his arms crossed over his breast in a very edifying fashion.

The curé harangued the little boys. Let them take care later on in life not to act like Judas, who betrayed his God, but to preserve always their robe of innocence.

Pécuchet was regretting his when there was a sudden moving of the seats: the mothers were impatient to embrace their children.

The parishioners, on their way out, exchanged felicitations. Some shed tears. Madame de Faverges, while waiting for her carriage, turned round towards Bouvard and Pécuchet, and presented her future son-in-law: "Baron de Mahurot, engineer." The count was sorry not to have the pleasure of their company. He would return the following week. "Pray bear it in mind."

The carriage having now come up, the ladies of the château departed, and the throng dispersed.

They found a parcel inside their own grounds in the middle of the grass. The postman, as the house had been shut up, had thrown it over the wall. It was the work which Barberou had promised to send, *Examination of Christianity*, by Louis Hervieu, a former pupil of the Normal School. Pécuchet would have nothing to say to it, and Bouvard had no desire to make himself acquainted with it.

He had been repeatedly told that the sacrament would transform him. For several days he awaited its blossomings in his conscience. He remained the same as ever, and a painful astonishment took possession of him.

What! The Flesh of God mingles with our flesh, and it produces no effect there! The Thought which governs the world does not illuminate our spirits! The Supreme Power abandons us to impotence!

M. Jeufroy, while reassuring him, prescribed for him the catechism of the Abbé Gaume.

On the other hand, Pécuchet's devotion had become developed. He would have liked to communicate under two species, kept singing psalms as he walked along the corridor, and stopped the people of Chavignolles to argue with, and to convert them. Vaucorbeil laughed in his face; Girbal shrugged his shoulders; and the captain called him "Tartuffe."

It was now thought that they were going too far.

It is an excellent custom to consider things as so many symbols. If the thunder rumbles, imagine to yourself the Last Judgment; at sight of a cloudless sky, think of the abode of the blessed; say to yourself in your walks that every step brings you nearer to death. Pécuchet observed this method.

When he took hold of his clothes, he thought of the carnal envelope in which the Second Person of the Trinity was clad; the ticking of the clock recalled to him the beatings of His heart, and the prick of a pin the nails of the Cross. But in vain did he remain on his knees for hours and multiply his fasts and strain his imagination. He did not succeed in getting detached from self; it was impossible to attain to perfect contemplation.

He had recourse to mystic authors: St. Theresa, John of the Cross, Louis of Granada, Simpoli, and, of the more modern, Monseigneur Chaillot. Instead of the sublimities which he expected, he encountered only platitudes, a very disjointed style, frigid imagery, and many comparisons drawn from lapidaries' shops.

He learned, however, that there is an active purgation and a passive purgation, an internal vision and an external vision, four kinds of prayers, nine excellencies in love, six degrees in humility, and that the wounding of the soul is not very different from spiritual theft.

Some points embarrassed him.

"Since the flesh is accursed, how is it that we are bound to thank God for the boon of existence?" "What proportion must be observed between the fear indispensable to the salvation and the hope which is no less so?" "Where is the sign of grace?" etc.

M. Jeufroy's answers were simple.

"Don't worry yourself. By desiring to sift everything we rush along a perilous slope."

The *Catechism of Perseverance,* by Gaume, had disgusted Pécuchet so much that he took up Louis

Hervieu's book. It was a summary of modern exegesis, prohibited by the government. Barberou, as a republican, had bought the book.

It awakened doubts in Bouvard's mind, and, first of all, on original sin. "If God had created man peccable, He ought not to punish him; and evil is anterior to the Fall, since there were already volcanoes and wild beasts. In short, this dogma upsets my notions of justice."

"What would you have?" said the curé. "It is one of those truths about which everybody is agreed, without being able to furnish proofs of it; and we ourselves make the crimes of their fathers rebound on the children. Thus morality and law justify this decree of Providence, since we find it in nature."

Bouvard shook his head. He had also doubts about hell.

"For every punishment should look to the amelioration of the guilty person, which is impossible where the penalty is eternal; and how many are enduring it? Just think! All the ancients, the Jews, the Mussulmans, the idolaters, the heretics, and the children who have died without baptism—those children created by God, and for what end?—for the purpose of being punished for a sin which they did not commit!"

"Such is St. Augustine's opinion," added the curé; "and St. Fulgentius involves even the unborn child in damnation. The Church, it is true, has come to no decision on this matter. One remark, however. It is not God, but the sinner who damns himself; and the offence being infinite, since God is infinite, the punishment must be infinite. Is that all, sir?"

"Explain the Trinity to me," said Bouvard.

"With pleasure. Let us take a comparison: the three sides of a triangle, or rather our soul, which contains being, knowing, and willing; what we call faculty in the case of man is person in God. There is the mystery."

"But the three sides of the triangle are not each the triangle; these three faculties of the soul do not make three souls, and your persons of the Trinity are three Gods."

"Blasphemy!"

"So then there is only one person, one God, one substance affected in three ways!"

"Let us adore without understanding," said the curé.

"Be it so," said Bouvard. He was afraid of being taken for an atheist, and getting into bad odour at the château.

They now visited there three times a week, about five o'clock in winter, and the cup of tea warmed them. The count's manners recalled the ease of the ancient court; the countess, placid and plump, exhibited much discernment about everything. Mademoiselle Yolande, their daughter, was the type of the young person, the angel of "keepsakes"; and Madame de Noares, their lady companion, resembled Pécuchet in having a pointed nose like him.

The first time they entered the drawing-room she was defending somebody.

"I assure you he is changed. His gift is a proof of it."

This somebody was Gorju. He had made the betrothed couple an offer of a Gothic prie-dieu. It was brought. The arms of the two houses appeared on

it in coloured relief. M. de Mahurot seemed satisfied with it, and Madame de Noares said to him:

"You will remember my *protégés?*"

Then she brought in two children, a boy of a dozen years and his sister, who was perhaps ten. Through the holes in their rags could be seen their limbs, reddened with cold. The one was shod in old slippers, the other wore only one wooden shoe. Their foreheads disappeared under their hair, and they stared around them with burning eyeballs like famished wolves.

Madame de Noares told how she had met them that morning on the high-road. Placquevent could not give any information about them.

They were asked their names.

"Victor — Victorine."

"Where was their father?"

"In jail."

"And what was he doing before that?"

"Nothing."

"Their country?"

"St. Pierre."

"But which St. Pierre?"

The two little ones for sole response, said, snivelling:

"Don't know — don't know."

Their mother was dead, and they were begging.

Madame de Noares explained how dangerous it would be to abandon them; she moved the countess, piqued the count's sense of honour, was backed up by mademoiselle, pressed the matter — succeeded.

The gamekeeper's wife would take charge of them. Later, work would be found for them, and, as they did not know how to read or write, Madame de

Noares gave them lessons herself, with a view to preparing them for catechism.

When M. Jeufroy used to come to the château, the two youngsters would be sent for; he would question them, and then deliver a lecture, into which he would import a certain amount of display on account of his audience.

On one occasion, when the abbé had discoursed about the patriarchs, Bouvard, on the way home with him and Pécuchet, disparaged them very much.

"Jacob is notorious for his thieveries, David for his murders, Solomon for his debaucheries."

The abbé replied that we should look further into the matter. Abraham's sacrifice is a prefigurement of the Passion; Jacob is another type of the Messiah, just like Joseph, like the Brazen Serpent, like Moses.

"Do you believe," said Bouvard, "that he composed the 'Pentateuch'?"

"Yes, no doubt."

"And yet his death is recorded in it; the same observation applies to Joshua; and, as for the Judges, the author informs us that, at the period whose history he was writing, Israel had not yet kings. The work was, therefore, written under the Kings. The Prophets, too, astonish me."

"He's going to deny the Prophets now!"

"Not at all! but their overheated imagination saw Jehovah under different forms — that of a fire, of a bush, of an old man, of a dove; and they were not certain of revelation since they are always asking for a sign."

"Ha! and where have you found out these nice things?"

"In Spinoza."

At this word, the curé jumped.

"Have you read him?"

"God forbid!"

"Nevertheless, sir, science ——"

"Sir, no one can be a scholar without being a Christian."

Science furnished a subject for sarcasms on his part:

"Will it make an ear of corn sprout, this science of yours? What do we know?" he said.

But he did know that the world was created for us; he did know that archangels are above the angels; he did know that the human body will rise again such as it was about the age of thirty.

His ecclesiastical self-complacency provoked Bouvard, who, through want of confidence in Louis Hervieu, had written to Varlot; and Pécuchet, better informed, asked M. Jeufroy for explanations of Scripture.

The six days of Genesis mean six great epochs. The pillage of the precious vessels made by the Jews from the Egyptians must be interpreted to mean intellectual riches, the arts of which they had stolen the secret. Isaiah did not strip himself completely, *nudus* in Latin signifying "up to the hips": thus Virgil advises people to go naked in order to plough, and that writer would not have given a precept opposed to decency. Ezekiel devouring a book has nothing extraordinary in it; do we not speak of devouring a pamphlet, a newspaper?

"But if we see metaphors everywhere, what will become of the facts?"

The abbé maintained, nevertheless, that they were realities.

This way of understanding them appeared disloyal to Pécuchet. He pushed his investigations further, and brought a note on the contradictions of the Bible.

"Exodus teaches us that for forty years they offered up sacrifices in the desert; according to Amos and Jeremiah they offered up none. Paralipomenon and the book of Esdras are not in agreement as to the enumeration of the people. In Deuteronomy, Moses saw the Lord face to face; according to Exodus, he could not see Him. Where, then, is the inspiration?"

"An additional ground for admitting it," replied M. Jeufroy smiling. "Impostors have need of connivance; the sincere take no such precautions. In perplexity, have recourse to the Church. She is always infallible."

"On whom does her infallibility depend?"

"The Councils of Basle and of Constance attribute it to the councils. But often the councils are at variance — witness that which decided in favour of Athanasius and of Arius; those of Florence and Lateran award it to the Pope."

"But Adrian VI. declares that the Pope may be mistaken, like any other person."

"Quibbles! All that does not affect the permanence of dogma."

"Louis Hervieu's work points out the variations: baptism was formerly reserved for adults, extreme unction was not a sacrament till the ninth century, the Real Presence was decreed in the eighth, purgatory recognised in the fifteenth, the Immaculate Conception is a thing of yesterday."

And so it came to pass that Pécuchet did not

know what to think of Jesus. Three Evangelists make him out to be a man. In one passage of St. John he appears to be equal to God; in another, all the same, to acknowledge himself His inferior.

The abbé rejoined by citing the letter of King Abgar, the acts of Pilate, and the testimony of the sibyls, "the foundation of which is genuine." He found the Virgin again amongst the Gauls, the announcement of a Redeemer in China, the Trinity everywhere, the Cross on the cap of the Grand Lama, and in Egypt in the closed hands of the gods; and he even exhibited an engraving representing a nilometer, which, according to Pécuchet, was a phallus.

M. Jeufroy secretly consulted his friend Pruneau, who searched for proofs for him in the authors. A conflict of erudition was waged, and, lashed by conceit, Pécuchet became abstruse, mythological. He compared the Virgin to Isis, the Eucharist to the Homa of the Persians, Bacchus to Moses, Noah's ark to the ship of Xithurus. These analogies demonstrated to his satisfaction the identity of religions.

But there cannot be several religions, since there is only one God. And when he was at the end of his arguments, the man in the cassock exclaimed: "It is a mystery!"

"What is the meaning of that word? Want of knowledge: very good. But if it denotes a thing the mere statement of which involves contradiction, it is a piece of stupidity."

And now Pécuchet would never let M. Jeufroy alone. He would surprise him in the garden, wait for him in the confessional, and take up the argument again in the sacristy.

The priest had to invent plans in order to escape from him.

One day, after he had started for Sassetot on a sick call, Pécuchet proceeded along the road in front of him in such a way as to render conversation inevitable.

It was an evening about the end of August. The red sky began to darken, and a large cloud lowered above them, regular at the base and forming volutes at the top.

Pécuchet at first talked about indifferent subjects, then, having slipped out the word "martyr":

"How many do you think there were of them?"

"A score of millions at least."

"Their number is not so great, according to Origen."

"Origen, you know, is open to suspicion."

A big gust of wind swept past, violently shaking the grass beside the ditches and the two rows of young elm trees that stretched towards the end of the horizon.

Pécuchet went on:

"Amongst the martyrs we include many Gaulish bishops killed while resisting the barbarians, which is no longer the question at issue."

"Do you wish to defend the emperors?"

According to Pécuchet, they had been calumniated.

"The history of the Theban legion is a fable. I also question Symphorosa and her seven sons, Felicitas and her seven daughters, and the seven virgins of Ancyra condemned to violation, though septuagenarians, and the eleven thousand virgins of St. Ursula, of whom one companion was called *Undecemilla*, a

name taken for a figure; still more, the ten martyrs of Alexandria!"

"And yet—and yet they are found in authors worthy of credit."

Raindrops fell, and the curé unrolled his umbrella; and Pécuchet, when he was under it, went so far as to maintain that the Catholics had made more martyrs than the Jews, the Mussulmans, the Protestants, and the Freethinkers—than all those of Rome in former days.

The priest exclaimed:

"But we find ten persecutions from the reign of Nero to that of Cæsar Galba!"

"Well! and the massacres of the Albigenses? and St. Bartholomew? and the revocation of the Edict of Nantes?"

"Deplorable excesses, no doubt; but you do not mean to compare these people to St. Étienne, St. Lawrence, Cyprian, Polycarp, a crowd of missionaries?"

"Excuse me! I will remind you of Hypatia, Jerome of Prague, John Huss, Bruno, Vanini, Anne Dubourg!"

The rain increased, and its drops dashed down with such force that they rebounded from the ground like little white rockets.

Pécuchet and M. Jeufroy walked on slowly, pressed close to one another, and the curé said:

"After abominable tortures they were flung into vessels of boiling water."

"The Inquisition made use of the same kind of torture, and it burned very well for you."

"Illustrious ladies were exhibited to the public gaze in the *lupanars*."

"Do you believe Louis XIV.'s dragoons regarded decency?"

"And mark well that the Christians had done nothing against the State."

"No more had the Huguenots."

The wind swept the rain into the air. It clattered on the leaves, trickled at the side of the road; and the mud-coloured sky intermingled with the fields, which lay bare after the close of harvest. Not a root was to be seen. Only, in the distance, a shepherd's hut.

Pécuchet's thin overcoat had no longer a dry thread in it. The water ran along his spine, got into his boots, into his ears, into his eyes, in spite of the Amoros headpiece. The curé, while lifting up with one hand the tail of his cassock, uncovered his legs; and the points of his three-cornered hat sputtered the water over his shoulders, like the gargoyles of a cathedral.

They had to stop, and, turning their backs to the storm, they remained face to face, belly to belly, holding with their four hands the swaying umbrella.

M. Jeufroy had not interrupted his vindication of the Catholics.

"Did they crucify your Protestants, as was done to St. Simeon; or get a man devoured by two tigers, as happened to St. Ignatius?"

"But make some allowance for the number of women separated from their husbands, children snatched from their mothers, and the exile of the poor across the snow, in the midst of precipices. They huddled them together in prisons; just when they were at the point of death they were dragged along on the hurdle."

The abbé sneered. "You will allow me not to believe a word of it. And our martyrs are less doubtful. St. Blandina was delivered over naked in a net to a furious cow. St. Julia was beaten to death. St. Taracus, St. Probus, and St. Andronicus had their teeth broken with a hammer, their sides torn with iron combs, their hands pierced with reddened nails, and their scalps carried off."

"You are exaggerating," said Pécuchet. "The death of the martyrs was at that time an amplification of rhetoric."

"What! of rhetoric?"

"Why, yes; whilst what I relate to you, sir, is history. The Catholics in Ireland disembowelled pregnant women in order to take their children ——"

"Never!"

"—— and give them to the pigs."

"Come now!"

"In Belgium they buried women alive."

"What nonsense!"

"We have their names."

"And even so," objected the priest, angrily shaking his umbrella, "they cannot be called martyrs. There are no martyrs outside the Church."

"One word. If the value of a martyr depends on the doctrine, how could he serve to demonstrate its existence?"

The rain ceased; they did not speak again till they reached the village. But, on the threshold of the presbytery, the curé said:

"I pity you! really, I pity you!"

Pécuchet immediately told Bouvard about the wrangle. It had filled him with an antipathy to religion, and, an hour later, seated before a brushwood

fire, they both read the *Curé Meslier*. These dull negations disgusted Pécuchet; then, reproaching himself for perhaps having misunderstood heroes, he ran through the history of the most illustrious martyrs in the Biography.

What a clamour from the populace when they entered the arena! and, if the lions and the jaguars were too quiet, the people urged them to come forward by their gestures and their cries. The victims could be seen covered with gore, smiling where they stood, with their gaze towards heaven. St. Perpetua bound up her hair in order that she might not look dejected.

Pécuchet began to reflect. The window was open, the night tranquil; many stars were shining. There must have passed through these martyrs' souls things of which we have no idea—a joy, a divine spasm! And Pécuchet, by dwelling on the subject, believed that he understood this emotion, and that he would have done the same himself.

"You?"

"Certainly."

"No fudge! Do you believe—yes or no?"

"I don't know."

He lighted a candle; then, his eyes falling on the crucifix in the alcove:

"How many wretches have sought help from that!"

And, after a brief silence:

"They have denaturalised Him. It is the fault of Rome—the policy of the Vatican."

But Bouvard admired the Church for her magnificence, and would have brought back the Middle Ages provided he might be a cardinal.

"You must admit I should have looked well in the purple."

Pécuchet's headpiece, placed in front of the fire, was not yet dry. While stretching it out he felt something in the lining, and out tumbled a medal of St. Joseph.

Madame de Noares wished to ascertain from Pécuchet whether he had not experienced some kind of change, bringing him happiness, and betrayed herself by her questions. On one occasion, whilst he was playing billiards, she had sewn the medal in his cap.

Evidently she was in love with him: they might marry; she was a widow, and he had had no suspicion of this attachment, which might have brought about his life's happiness.

Though he exhibited a more religious tendency than M. Bouvard, she had dedicated him to St. Joseph, whose succour is favourable to conversions.

No one knew so well as she all the beads and the indulgences which they procure, the effect of relics, the privileges of blessed waters. Her watch was attached to a chain that had touched the bonds of St. Peter. Amongst her trinkets glittered a pearl of gold, in imitation of the one in the church of Allouagne containing a tear of Our Lord; a ring on her little finger enclosed some of the hair of the curé of Ars, and, as she was in the habit of collecting simples for the sick, her apartment was like a sacristy combined with an apothecary's laboratory.

Her time was passed in writing letters, in visiting the poor, in dissolving irregular connections, and in distributing photographs of the Sacred Heart. A gentleman had promised to send her some "martyr's paste," a mixture of paschal wax and human dust

taken from the Catacombs, and used in desperate cases in the shape of fly-blisters and pills. She promised some of it to Pécuchet.

He appeared shocked at such materialism.

In the evening a footman from the château brought him a basketful of little books relating pious phrases of the great Napoleon, witticisms of clergymen at inns, frightful deaths that had happened to atheists. All those things Madame de Noares knew by heart, along with an infinite number of miracles. She related several stupid ones—miracles without an object, as if God had performed them to excite the wonder of the world. Her own grandmother had locked up in a cupboard some prunes covered with a piece of linen, and when the cupboard was opened a year later they saw thirteen of them on the cloth forming a cross.

"Explain this to me."

This was the phrase she used after her marvellous tales, which she declared to be true, with the obstinacy of a mule. Apart from this she was a harmless woman of lively disposition.

On one occasion, however, she deviated from her character.

Bouvard was disputing with her about the miracle of Pezilla: this was a fruit-dish in which wafers had been hidden during the Revolution and which had become gilded of itself.

"Perhaps there was at the bottom a little yellow colour caused by humidity?"

"Not at all! I repeat it, there was not! The cause of the gilding was the contact with the Eucharist."

By way of proof she relied on the attestations of bishops.

"It is, they say, like a buckler, a — a palladium over the diocese of Perpignan. Ask Monsieur Jeufroy, then!"

Bouvard could not stand this kind of talk any longer; and, after he had looked over his Louis Hervieu, he took Pécuchet off with them.

The clergyman was finishing his dinner. Reine offered them chairs, and, at a gesture from her master, she went to fetch two little glasses, which she filled with Rosolio.

After this Bouvard explained what had brought him there.

The abbé did not reply candidly.

"Everything is possible to God, and the miracles are a proof of religion."

"However, there are laws of nature—"

"That makes no difference to Him. He sets them aside in order to instruct, to correct."

"How do you know whether He sets them aside?" returned Bouvard. "So long as Nature follows her routine we never bestow a thought on it, but in an extraordinary phenomenon we believe we see the hand of God."

"It may be there," replied the ecclesiastic; "and when an occurrence has been certified by witnesses——"

"The witnesses swallow everything, for there are spurious miracles."

The priest grew red.

"Undoubtedly; sometimes."

"How can we distinguish them from the genuine ones? If the genuine ones, given as proofs, have themselves need of proofs, why perform them?"

Reine interposed, and, preaching like her master, said it was necessary to obey.

"Life is a passage, but death is eternal."

"In short," suggested Bouvard, guzzling the Rosolio, "the miracles of former times are not better demonstrated than the miracles of to-day; analogous reasonings uphold those of Christians and Pagans."

The curé flung down his fork on the table.

"Again I tell you those miracles were spurious! There are no miracles outside of the Church."

"Stop!" said Pécuchet, "that is the same argument you used regarding the martyrs: the doctrine rests on the facts and the facts on the doctrine."

M. Jeufroy, having swallowed a glass of water, replied:

"Even while denying them you believe in them. The world which twelve fishermen converted—look at that! it seems to me a fine miracle."

"Not at all!"

Pécuchet gave a different account of the matter: "Monotheism comes from the Hebrews; the Trinity from the Indians; the Logos belongs to Plato, and the Virgin Mother to Asia."

No matter! M. Jeufroy clung to the supernatural and did not desire that Christianity should have humanly the least reason for its existence, though he saw amongst all peoples foreshadowings or deformations of it. The scoffing impiety of the eighteenth century he would have tolerated, but modern criticism, with its politeness, exasperated him.

"I prefer the atheist who blasphemes to the sceptic who cavils."

Then he looked at them with an air of bravado, as if to dismiss them.

Pécuchet returned home in a melancholy frame of mind. He had hoped for a reconciliation between faith and reason.

Bouvard made him read this passage from Louis Hervieu:

"In order to know the abyss which separates them, oppose their axioms.

"Reason says to you: 'The whole comprehends the part,' and faith replies to you: 'By substantiation, Jesus, while communicating with the apostles, had His body in His hand and His head in His mouth.'

"Reason says to you: 'No one is responsible for the crime of another,' and faith replies to you: 'By original sin.'

"Reason says to you: 'Three make three,' and faith declares that 'Three make one.'"

They no longer associated with the abbé.

It was the period of the war with Italy. The respectable people were trembling for the Pope. They were thundering against Victor Emmanuel. Madame de Noares went so far as to wish for his death. Bouvard and Pécuchet alone protested timidly.

When the door of the drawing-room flew open in front of them and they looked at themselves in the lofty mirrors, as they passed, whilst through the windows they caught a glimpse of the walks where glared above the grass the red waistcoat of a man-servant, they felt a sensation of delight; and the luxuriousness of their surroundings rendered them indulgent to the words that were uttered there.

The count lent them all the works of M. de Maistre. He expounded the principles contained in them before a circle of intimate friends—Hurel, the

curé, the justice of the peace, the notary, and the baron, his future son-in-law, who used to come from time to time for twenty-four hours to the château.

"What is abominable," said the count, "is the spirit of 'eighty-nine. First of all they question the existence of God; then they dispute about government; then comes liberty—liberty for insults, for revolt, for enjoyments, or rather for plunder, so that religion and authority ought to proscribe the independents, the heretics. No doubt they will protest against what they call persecution, as if the executioners persecuted the criminals. Let me resume: No State without God! the law being unable to command respect unless it comes from on high, and, in fact, it is not a question of the Italians, but of determining which shall have the best of it, the Revolution or the Pope, Satan or Jesus Christ."

M. Jeufroy expressed his approval by monosyllables, Hurel by means of a smile, and the justice of the peace by nodding his head. Bouvard and Pécuchet kept their eyes fixed on the ceiling; Madame de Noares, the countess, and Yolande were making clothes for the poor, and M. de Mahurot, beside his betrothed, was turning over the leaves of a book.

Then came intervals of silence, during which everyone seemed to be absorbed in the investigation of a problem. Napoleon III. was no longer a saviour, and he had even given a deplorable example by allowing the masons at the Tuileries to work on Sunday.

"It ought not to be permitted," was the ordinary phrase of the count.

Social economy, fine arts, literature, history, scientific doctrines—on all he decided in his quality

of Christian and father of a family; and would to God that the government, in this respect, exercised the same severity that he exhibited in his household! Authority alone is the judge of the dangers of science: spread too extensively, it inspires fatal ambitions in the breasts of the people. They were happier, these poor people, when the nobles and the bishops tempered the absolutism of the king. The manufacturers now make use of them. They are on the point of sinking into slavery.

And all looked back with regret to the old *régime*, Hurel through meanness, Coulon through ignorance, Marescot as a man of artistic tastes.

Bouvard, when he found himself at home once more, fortified his mind with a course of Lamettrie, Holbach, and others; whilst Pécuchet forsook a religion which had become a medium of government.

M. de Mahurot had communicated in order the better to charm the ladies, and, if he adopted it as a practice, it was in the interests of the servants.

A mathematician and *dilettante*, who played waltzes on the piano and admired Topffer, he was distinguished by a tasteful scepticism. What was said about feudal abuses, the Inquisition, and the Jesuits, was the result of prejudice. He extolled progress, though he despised everyone who was not a gentleman, or who had not come from the Polytechnic School!

M. Jeufroy likewise displeased the two friends. He believed in sorcery, made jokes about idolatry, declared that all idioms are derived from the Hebrew. His rhetoric lacked the element of novelty: it was invariably the stag at bay, honey and absinthe, gold

and lead, perfumes, urns, and the comparison of the Christian soul to the soldier who ought to say in the face of sin: "Thou shalt not pass!"

In order to avoid his discourses they used to come to the château at as late an hour as possible.

One day, however, they encountered him there. He had been an hour awaiting his two pupils. Suddenly Madame de Noares entered.

"The little girl has disappeared. I am bringing Victor in. Ah! the wretch!"

She had found in his pocket a silver thimble which she had lost three days ago. Then, stifled with sobs:

"That is not all! While I was giving him a scolding, he turned his back on me!"

And, ere the count and countess could have said a word:

"However, it is my own fault: pardon me!"

She had concealed from them the fact that the two orphans were the children of Touache, who was now in prison.

What was to be done?

If the count sent them away they would be lost, and his act of charity would be taken for a caprice.

M. Jeufroy was not surprised. Since man is corrupt, our natural duty is to punish him in order to improve him.

Bouvard protested. Leniency was better. But the count once more expatiated on the iron hand indispensable for children as well as for the people. These two children were full of vices—the little girl was untruthful, the boy brutish. This theft, after all, might have been excused, the impertinence never. Education should be the school of respect.

Therefore Sorel, the gamekeeper, would immediately administer to the youngster a good flogging.

M. de Mahurot, who had something to say to him, undertook the commission. He went to the anteroom for a gun, and called Victor, who had remained in the centre of the courtyard with downcast head.

"Follow me," said the baron. As the way to the gamekeeper's lodge turned off a little from Chavignolles, M. Jeufroy, Bouvard, and Pécuchet accompanied him.

At a hundred paces from the château, he begged them not to speak any more while he was walking along the wood.

The ground sloped down to the river's edge, where rose great blocks of stone. At sunset they looked like slabs of gold. On the opposite side the green hillocks were wrapped in shadow. A keen wind was blowing. Rabbits came out of their burrows, and began browsing on the grass.

A shot went off; a second; a third: and the rabbits jumped up, then rolled over. Victor flung himself on them to seize hold of them, and panted, soaking with perspiration.

"You have your clothes in nice condition!" said the baron.

There was blood on his ragged blouse.

Bouvard shrank from the sight of blood. He would not admit that it ever should be shed.

M. Jeufroy returned:

"Circumstances sometimes make it necessary. If the guilty person does not give his own, there is need of another's—a truth which the Redemption teaches us."

According to Bouvard, it had been of hardly any use, since nearly all mankind would be damned, in spite of the sacrifice of Our Lord.

"But every day He renews it in the Eucharist."

"And whatever be the unworthiness of the priest," said Pécuchet, "the miracle takes place at the words."

"There is the mystery, sir."

Meanwhile Victor had riveted his eyes on the gun, and he even tried to touch it.

"Down with your paws!" And M. de Mahurot took a long path through the wood.

The clergyman had placed Pécuchet on one side of him and Bouvard at the other, and said to the latter:

"Attention, you know. *Debetur pueris.*"

Bouvard assured him that he humbled himself in the presence of the Creator, but was indignant at their having made Him a man. We fear His vengeance; we work for His glory. He has every virtue: an arm, an eye, a policy, a habitation.

"'Our Father, who art in heaven,' what does that mean?"

And Pécuchet added: "The universe has become enlarged; the earth is no longer its central point. It revolves amongst an infinite multitude of other worlds. Many of them surpass it in grandeur, and this belittlement of our globe shows a more sublime ideal of God.

"So, then, religion must change. Paradise is something infantile, with its blessed always in a state of contemplation, always chanting hymns, and looking from on high at the tortures of the damned. When one reflects that Christianity had for its basis an apple!"

The curé was annoyed. "Deny revelation; that would be simpler."

"How do you make out that God spoke?" said Bouvard.

"Prove that he did not speak!" said M. Jeufroy.

"Once again, who affirms it?"

"The Church."

"Nice testimony!"

This discussion bored M. de Mahurot, and, as he walked along: "Pray listen to the curé. He knows more than you."

Bouvard and Pécuchet made signs to indicate that they were taking another road; then, at Croix-Verte:

"A very good evening."

"Your servant," said the baron.

All this would be told to M. de Faverges, and perhaps a rupture would result. So much the worse. They felt that they were despised by those people of rank. They were never asked to dinner, and they were tired of Madame de Noares, with her continual remonstrances.

They could not, however, keep the De Maistre; and a fortnight after they returned to the château, not expecting to be welcomed, but they were. All the family were in the boudoir, and amongst those present were Hurel and, strangely enough, Foureau.

Correction had failed to correct Victor. He refused to learn his catechism; and Victorine gave utterance to vulgar words. In short, the boy should go to a reformatory, and the girl to a nunnery. Foureau was charged with carrying out the measure, and he was about to go when the countess called him back.

They were waiting for M. Jeufroy to fix the date of the marriage, which was to take place at the

mayor's office before being celebrated in the church, in order to show that they looked on civil marriage with contempt.

Foureau tried to defend it. The count and Hurel attacked it. What was a municipal function beside a priesthood?—and the baron would not have believed himself to be really wedded if he had been married only in the presence of a tri-coloured scarf.

"Bravo!" said M. Jeufroy, who had just come in. "Marriage having been established by Jesus Christ——"

Pécuchet stopped him: "In which Gospel? In the Apostolic times they respected it so little that Tertullian compares it to adultery."

"Oh! upon my word!"

"Yes, certainly! and it is not a sacrament. A sign is necessary for a sacrament. Show me the sign in marriage."

In vain did the curé reply that it represented the union of God with the Church.

"You do not understand Christianity either! And the law——"

"The law preserves the stamp of Christianity," said M. de Faverges. "Without that, it would permit polygamy."

A voice rejoined: "Where would be the harm?"

It was Bouvard, half hidden by a curtain.

"You might have many wives, like the Patriarchs, the Mormons, the Mussulmans, and nevertheless be an honest man."

"Never!" exclaimed the priest; "honesty consists in rendering what is due. We owe homage to God. So he who is not a Christian is not honest."

"Just as much as others," said Bouvard.

The count, believing that he saw in this rejoinder an attack on religion, extolled it. It had set free the slaves.

Bouvard referred to authorities to prove the contrary:

"St. Paul recommends them to obey their masters as they would obey Jesus. St. Ambrose calls servitude a gift of God. Leviticus, Exodus, and the Councils have sanctioned it. Bossuet treats it as a part of the law of nations. And Monseigneur Bouvier approves of it."

The count objected that, none the less, Christianity had developed civilisation.

"Ay, and idleness, by making a virtue of poverty."

"However, sir, the morality of the Gospel?"

"Ha! ha! not so moral! Those who labour only during the last hour are paid as much as those who labour from the first hour. To him who hath is given, and from him who hath not is taken away. As for the precept of receiving blows without returning them and of letting yourself be robbed, it encourages the audacious, the cowardly, and the dissolute."

They were doubly scandalised when Pécuchet declared that he liked Buddhism as well.

The priest burst out laughing.

"Ha! ha! ha! Buddhism!"

Madame de Noares lifted up her hands: "Buddhism!"

"What! Buddhism!" repeated the count.

"Do you understand it?" said Pécuchet to M. Jeufroy, who had become confused. "Well, then,

learn something about it. Better than Christianity, and before it, it has recognised the nothingness of earthly things. Its practices are austere, its faithful more numerous than the entire body of Christians; and, as for incarnation, Vishnu had not merely one, but nine of them. So judge."

"Travellers' lies!" said Madame de Noares.

"Backed up by the Freemasons!" added the curé.

And all talking at the same time:

"Come, then, go on!"

"Very pretty!"

"For my part, I think it funny!"

"Not possible!"

Finally, Pécuchet, exasperated, declared that he would become a Buddhist!

"You are insulting Christian ladies," said the baron.

Madame de Noares sank into an armchair. The countess and Yolande remained silent. The count kept rolling his eyes; Hurel was waiting for his orders. The abbé, to contain himself, read his breviary.

This sight calmed M. de Faverges; and, looking at the two worthies:

"Before you find fault with the Gospel, and that when there may be stains on your own lives, there is some reparation——"

"Reparation?"

"For stains?"

"Enough! gentlemen. You don't understand me." Then, addressing Foureau: "Sorel is informed about it. Go to him."

Bouvard and Pécuchet withdrew without bowing.

At the end of the avenue they all three gave vent to their indignation.

"They treated me as if I were a servant," grumbled Foureau; and, as his companions agreed with him, in spite of their recollection of the affair of the hemorrhoids, he exhibited towards them a kind of sympathy.

Road-menders were working in the neighbourhood. The man who was over them drew near: it was Gorju. They began to chat.

He was overseeing the macàdamisation of the road, voted in 1848, and he owed this post to M. de Mahurot, the engineer. "The one that's going to marry Mademoiselle de Faverges. I suppose 'tis from the house below you were just coming?"

"For the last time," said Pécuchet gruffly.

Gorju assumed an innocent air. "A quarrel! Come, come!"

And if they could have seen his countenance when they had turned on their heels, they might have observed that he had scented the cause of it.

A little further on, they stopped before a trellised enclosure, inside which there were kennels, and also a red-tiled cottage.

Victorine was on the threshold. They heard dogs barking. The gamekeeper's wife came out. Knowing the object of the mayor's visit, she called to Victor. Everything was ready beforehand, and their outfit was contained in two pocket-handkerchiefs fastened together with pins.

"A pleasant journey," said the woman to the children, too glad to have no more to do with such vermin.

Was it their fault if they owed their birth to a convict father? On the contrary, they seemed very

quiet, and did not even betray any alarm as to the place to which they were being conveyed.

Bouvard and Pécuchet watched them as they walked in front of them.

Victorine muttered some unintelligible words, with her little bundle over her arm, like a milliner carrying a bandbox.

Every now and then she would turn round, and Pécuchet, at the sight of her fair curls and her pretty figure, regretted that he had not such a child. Brought up under different conditions, she would be charming later. What happiness only to see her growing tall, to hear day after day her bird-like warbling, to kiss her when the fancy seized him!—and a feeling of tenderness, rising from his heart to his lips, made his eyes grow moist and somewhat oppressed his spirit.

Victor, like a soldier, had slung his baggage over his shoulder. He whistled, threw stones at the crows in the furrows, and went to cut switches off the trees.

Foureau called him back; and Bouvard, holding him by the hand, was delighted at feeling within his own those fingers of a robust and vigorous lad. The poor little wretch asked for nothing but to grow freely, like a flower in the open air! and he would rot between closed walls with tasks, punishment, a heap of tomfooleries! Bouvard was seized with pity, springing from a sense of revolt, a feeling of indignation against Fate, one of those fits of rage in which one longs to destroy government altogether.

"Jump about!" he said, "amuse yourself! Have a bit of fun as long as you can!"

The youngster scampered off.

His sister and he were to sleep at the inn, and at daybreak the messenger from Falaise would take Victor and set him down at the reformatory of Beaubourg; while a nun belonging to the orphanage of Grand-Camp would come to fetch Victorine.

Foureau having gone into these details, was once more lost in his own thoughts. But Bouvard wished to know how much the maintenance of the youngsters would cost.

"Bah! a matter perhaps of three hundred francs. The count has given me twenty-five for the first disbursements. What a stingy fellow!"

And, stung to the heart by the contempt shown towards his scarf, Foureau quickened his pace in silence.

Bouvard murmured: "They make me feel sad. I will take the charge of them."

"And so will I," said Pécuchet, the same idea having occurred to both of them.

No doubt there were impediments?

"None," returned Foureau. Besides, he had the right as mayor to entrust deserted children to whomsoever he thought fit. And, after a prolonged hesitation:

"Well, yes; take them! That will annoy *him.*"

Bouvard and Pécuchet carried them off.

When they returned to their abode they found at the end of the staircase, under the Madonna, Marcel upon his knees praying with fervour. With his head thrown back, his eyes half closed, and his hare-lip gaping, he had the appearance of a fakir in ecstasy.

"What a brute!" said Bouvard.

"Why? He is perhaps attending to things that would make you envy him if you could only see

them. Are there not two worlds entirely distinct? The aim of a process of reasoning is of less consequence than the manner of reasoning. What does the form of belief matter? The great thing is to believe."

Such were the objections of Pécuchet to Bouvard's observation.

CHAPTER X.

Lessons in Art and Science.

THEY procured a number of works relating to education, and resolved to adopt a system of their own. It was necessary to banish every metaphysical idea, and, in accordance with the experimental method, to follow in the lines of natural development. There was no haste, for the two pupils might forget what they had learned.

Though they had strong constitutions, Pécuchet wished, like a Spartan, to make them more hardy, to accustom them to hunger, thirst, and severe weather, and even insisted on having their feet badly shod in order that they might be prepared for colds. Bouvard was opposed to this.

The dark closet at the end of the corridor was used as their sleeping apartment. Its furniture consisted of two folding beds, two couches, and a jug. Above their heads the top window was open, and spiders crawled along the plaster. Often the children recalled to mind the interior of a cabin where they used to wrangle. One night their father came home with blood on his hands. Some time afterwards the

gendarmes arrived. After that they lived in a wood. Men who made wooden shoes used to kiss their mother. She died, and was carried off in a cart. They used to get severe beatings; they got lost. Then they could see once more Madame de Noares and Sorel; and, without asking themselves the reason why they were in this house, they felt happy there. But they were disagreeably surprised when at the end of eight months the lessons began again. Bouvard took charge of the little girl, and Pécuchet of the boy.

Victor was able to distinguish letters, but did not succeed in forming syllables. He stammered over them, then stopped suddenly, and looked like an idiot. Victorine put questions. How was it that "ch" in "orchestra" had the sound of a "q," and that of a "k" in "archæology." We must sometimes join two vowels and at other times separate them. All this did not seem to her right. She grew indignant at it.

The teachers gave instruction at the same hour in their respective apartments, and, as the partition was thin, these four voices, one soft, one deep, and two sharp, made a hideous concert. To finish the business and to stimulate the youngsters by means of emulation, they conceived the idea of making them work together in the museum; and they proceeded to teach them writing. The two pupils, one at each end of the table, copied written words that were set for them; but the position of their bodies was awkward. It was necessary to straighten them; their copybooks fell down; their pens broke, and their ink bottles were turned upside down.

Victorine, on certain days, went on capitally for about three minutes, then she would begin to scrawl,

and, seized with discouragement, she would sit with her eyes fixed on the ceiling. Victor was not long before he fell asleep, lying over his desk.

Perhaps they were distressed by it? Too great a strain was bad for young heads.

"Let us stop," said Bouvard.

There is nothing so stupid as to make children learn by heart; yet, if the memory is not exercised, it will go to waste, and so they taught the youngsters to recite like parrots the first fables of La Fontaine. The children expressed their approval of the ant that heaped up treasure, of the wolf that devoured the lamb, and of the lion that took everyone's share.

When they had become more audacious, they spoiled the garden. But what amusement could be provided for them?

Jean Jacques Rousseau in *Emile* advises the teacher to get the pupil to make his own playthings. Bouvard could not contrive to make a hoop or Pécuchet to sew up a ball. They passed on to toys that were instructive, such as cut-paper work. Pécuchet showed them his microscope. When the candle was lighted, Bouvard would sketch with the shadow of his finger on the wall the profile of a hare or a pig. But the pupils grew tired of it.

Writers have gone into raptures about the delightfulness of an open-air luncheon or a boating excursion. Was it possible for them really to have such recreations? Fénelon recommends from time to time "an innocent conversation." They could not invent one. So they had to come back to the lessons—the multiplying bowls, the erasures of their scrawlings, and the process of teaching them how to read by copying

printed characters. All had proved failures, when suddenly a bright idea struck them.

As Victor was prone to gluttony, they showed him the name of a dish: he soon ran through *Le Cuisinier Français* with ease. Victorine, being a coquette, was promised a new dress if she wrote to the dressmaker for it: in less than three weeks she accomplished this feat. This was playing on their vices—a pernicious method, no doubt; but it had succeeded.

Now that they had learned to read and write, what should they be taught? Another puzzle.

Girls have no need of learning, as in the case of boys. All the same, they are usually brought up like mere animals, their sole intellectual baggage being confined to mystical follies.

Is it expedient to teach them languages? "Spanish and Italian," the Swan of Cambray lays down, "scarcely serve any purpose save to enable people to read dangerous books."

Such a motive appeared silly to them. However, Victorine would have to do only with these languages; whereas English is more widely used. Pécuchet proceeded to study the rules of the language. He seriously demonstrated the mode of expressing the "th"—"like this, now, *the, the, the.*"

But before instructing a child we must be acquainted with its aptitudes. They may be divined by phrenology. They plunged into it, then sought to verify its assertions by experiments on their own persons. Bouvard exhibited the bumps of benevolence, imagination, veneration, and amorous energy—*vulgo,* eroticism. On Pécuchet's temples were found philosophy and enthusiasm allied with a crafty disposition.

Such, in fact, were their characters. What surprised them more was to recognise in the one as well as in the other a propensity towards friendship, and, charmed with the discovery, they embraced each other with emotion.

They next made an examination of Marcel. His greatest fault, of which they were not ignorant, was an excessive appetite. Nevertheless Bouvard and Pécuchet were dismayed to find above the top of the ear, on a level with the eye, the organ of alimentivity. With advancing years their servant would perhaps become like the woman in the Salpêtrière, who every day ate eight pounds of bread, swallowed at one time fourteen different soups, and at another sixty bowls of coffee. They might not have enough to keep him.

The heads of their pupils presented no curious characteristics. No doubt they had gone the wrong way to work with them. A very simple expedient enabled them to develop their experience.

On market days they insinuated themselves among groups of country people on the green, amid the sacks of oats, the baskets of cheese, the calves and the horses, indifferent to the jostlings; and whenever they found a young fellow with his father, they asked leave to feel his skull for a scientific purpose. The majority vouchsafed no reply; others, fancying it was pomatum for ringworm of the scalp, refused testily. A few, through indifference, allowed themselves to be led towards the porch of the church, where they would be undisturbed.

One morning, just as Bouvard and Pécuchet were beginning operations, the curé suddenly presented himself, and seeing what they were about, denounced phrenology as leading to materialism and to fatalism.

The thief, the assassin, the adulterer, have henceforth only to cast the blame of their crimes on their bumps.

Bouvard retorted that the organ predisposes towards the act without forcing one to do it. From the fact that a man has in him the germ of a vice, there is nothing to show that he will be vicious.

"However, I wonder at the orthodox, for, while upholding innate ideas, they reject propensities. What a contradiction!"

But phrenology, according to M. Jeufroy, denied Divine Omnipotence, and it was unseemly to practise under the shadow of the holy place, in the very face of the altar.

"Take yourselves off! No!—take yourselves off!"

They established themselves in the shop of Ganot, the hairdresser. Bouvard and Pécuchet went so far as to treat their subjects' relations to a shave or a clip. One afternoon the doctor came to get his hair cut. While seating himself in the armchair he saw in the glass the reflection of the two phrenologists passing their fingers over a child's pate.

"So you are at these fooleries?" he said.

"Why foolery?"

Vaucorbeil smiled contemptuously, then declared that there were not several organs in the brain. Thus one man can digest food which another cannot digest. Are we to assume that there are as many stomachs in the stomach as there are varieties of taste?

They pointed out that one kind of work is a relaxation after another; an intellectual effort does not strain all the faculties at the same time; each has its distinct seat.

"The anatomists have not discovered it," said Vaucorbeil.

"That's because they have dissected badly," replied Pécuchet.

"What?"

"Oh, yes! they cut off slices without regard to the connection of the parts"—a phrase out of a book which recurred to his mind.

"What a piece of nonsense!" exclaimed the physician. "The cranium is not moulded over the brain, the exterior over the interior. Gall is mistaken, and I defy you to justify his doctrine by taking at random three persons in the shop."

The first was a country woman, with big blue eyes.

Pécuchet, looking at her, said:

"She has a good memory."

Her husband attested the fact, and offered himself for examination.

"Oh! you, my worthy fellow, it is hard to lead you."

According to the others, there was not in the world such a headstrong fellow.

The third experiment was made on a boy who was accompanied by his grandmother.

Pécuchet observed that he must be fond of music.

"I assure you it is so," said the good woman. "Show these gentlemen, that they may see for themselves."

He drew a Jew's-harp from under his blouse and began blowing into it.

There was a crashing sound—it was the violent slamming of the door by the doctor as he went out.

They were no longer in doubt about themselves, and summoning their two pupils, they resumed the analysis of their skull-bones.

That of Victorine was even all around, a sign of ponderation; but her brother had an unfortunate cranium—a very large protuberance in the mastoid angle of the parietal bones indicated the organ of destructiveness, of murder; and a swelling farther down was the sign of covetousness, of theft. Bouvard and Pécuchet remained dejected for eight days.

But it was necessary to comprehend the exact sense of words: what we call combativeness implies contempt for death. If it causes homicides, it may, likewise bring about the saving of lives. Acquisitiveness includes the tact of pickpockets and the ardour of merchants. Irreverence has its parallel in the spirit of criticism, craft in circumspection. An instinct always resolves itself into two parts, a bad one and a good one. The one may be destroyed by cultivating the other, and by this system a daring child, far from being a vagabond, may become a general. The sluggish man will have only prudence; the penurious, economy; the extravagant, generosity.

A magnificent dream filled their minds. If they carried to a successful end the education of their pupils, they would later found an establishment having for its object to correct the intellect, to subdue tempers, and to ennoble the heart. Already they talked about subscriptions and about the building.

Their triumph in Ganot's shop had made them famous, and people came to consult them in order that they might tell them their chances of good luck.

All sorts of skulls were examined for this purpose —bowl-shaped, pear-shaped, those rising like sugar

loaves, square heads, high heads, contracted skulls and flat skulls, with bulls' jaws, birds' faces, and eyes like pigs'; but such a crowd of people disturbed the hairdresser in his work. Their elbows rubbed against the glass cupboard that contained the perfumery, they put the combs out of order, the wash-hand stand was broken; so he turned out all the idlers, begging of Bouvard and Pécuchet to follow them, an ultimatum which they unmurmuringly accepted, being a little worn out with cranioscopy.

Next day, as they were passing before the little garden of the captain, they saw, chatting with him, Girbal, Coulon, the keeper, and his younger son, Zephyrin, dressed as an altar-boy. His robe was quite new, and he was walking below before returning to the sacristy, and they were complimenting him.

Curious to know what they thought of him, Placquevent asked "these gentlemen" to feel his young man's head.

The skin of his forehead looked tightly drawn; his nose, thin and very gristly at the tip, drooped slantwise over his pinched lips; his chin was pointed, his expression evasive, and his right shoulder was too high.

"Take off your cap," said his father to him.

Bouvard slipped his hands through his straw-coloured hair; then it was Pécuchet's turn, and they communicated to each other their observations in low tones:

"Evident *love of books!* Ha! ha! *approbativeness! Conscientiousness* wanting! No *amativeness!*"

"Well?" said the keeper.

Pécuchet opened his snuff-box, and took a pinch.

"Faith!" replied Bouvard, "this is scarcely a genius."

Placquevent reddened with humiliation.

"All the same, he will do my bidding."

"Oho! Oho!"

"But I am his father, by God! and I have certainly the right——"

"Within certain limits," observed Pécuchet.

Girbal interposed. "The paternal authority is indispensable."

"But if the father is an idiot?"

"No matter," said the captain; "his power is none the less absolute."

"In the interests of the children," added Coulon.

According to Bouvard and Pécuchet, they owed nothing to the authors of their being; and the parents, on the other hand, owed them food, education, forethought—in fact, everything.

Their good neighbours protested against this opinion as immoral. Placquevent was hurt by it as if it were an insult.

"For all that, they are a nice lot that you collect on the high-roads. They will go far. Take care!"

"Care of what?" said Pécuchet sourly.

"Oh! I am not afraid of you."

"Nor I of you either."

Coulon here used his influence to restrain the keeper and induce him to go away quietly.

For some minutes there was silence. Then there was some talk about the dahlias of the captain, who would not let his friends depart till he had exhibited every one of them.

Bouvard and Pécuchet were returning homeward when, a hundred paces in front of them, they noticed Placquevent; and close beside him Zephyrin was lift-

ing up his elbow, like a shield, to save his ear from being boxed.

What they had just heard expressed, in another form, were the opinions of the count; but the example of their pupils proved how much liberty had the advantage over coercion. However, a little discipline was desirable.

Pécuchet nailed up a blackboard in the museum for the purpose of demonstrations. They each resolved to keep a journal wherein the things done by the pupil, noted down every evening, could be read next morning, and, to regulate the work by ringing the bell when it should be finished. Like Dupont de Nemours, they would, at first, make use of the paternal injunction, then of the military injunction, and familiarity in addressing them would be forbidden.

Bouvard tried to teach Victorine ciphering. Sometimes he would make mistakes, and both of them would laugh. Then she would kiss him on the part of his neck which was smoothest and ask leave to go, and he would give his permission.

Pécuchet at the hour for lessons in vain rang the bell and shouted out the military injunction through the window. The brat did not come. His socks were always hanging over his ankles; even at table he thrust his fingers into his nostrils, and did not even keep in his wind. Broussais objects to reprimands on this point on the ground that "it is necessary to obey the promptings of a conservative instinct."

Victorine and he made use of frightful language, saying, *mé itou* instead of *moi aussi, bère* instead of *boire, al* instead of *elle,* and *deventiau* with the *iau;* but, as grammar cannot be understood by children,

and as they would learn the use of language by hearing others speak correctly, the two worthy men watched their own words till they found it quite distressing.

They held different views about the way to teach geography. Bouvard thought it more logical to begin with the commune, Pécuchet with the entire world.

With a watering-pot and some sand he sought to demonstrate what was meant by a river, an island, a gulf, and even sacrificed three flower-beds to explain three continents; but the cardinal points could not be got into Victor's head.

On a night in January Pécuchet carried him off in the open country. While they walked along he held forth on astronomy: mariners find it useful on their voyages; without it Christopher Columbus would not have made his discovery. We owe a debt of gratitude to Copernicus, to Galileo, and to Newton.

It was freezing hard, and in the dark blue sky countless stars were scintillating. Pécuchet raised his eyes.

"What! No Ursa Major!"

The last time he had seen it, it was turned to the other side. At length he recognised it, then pointed out the polar star, which is always turned towards the north, and by means of which travellers can find out their exact situation.

Next day he placed an armchair in the middle of the room and began to waltz round it.

"Imagine that this armchair is the sun and that I am the earth; it moves like this."

Victor stared at him, filled with astonishment.

After this he took an orange, passed through it a piece of stick to indicate the poles, then drew a circle

across it with charcoal to mark the equator. He next moved the orange round a wax candle, drawing attention to the fact that the various points on the surface were not illuminated at the same time—which causes the difference of climates; and for that of the seasons he sloped the orange, inasmuch as the earth does not stand up straight—which brings about the equinoxes and the solstices.

Victor did not understand a bit of it. He believed that the earth turns around in a long needle, and that the equator is a ring pressing its circumference.

By means of an atlas Pecuchet exhibited Europe to him; but, dazzled by so many lines and colours, he could no longer distinguish the names of different places. The bays and the mountains did not harmonise with the respective nations; the political order confused the physical order. All this, perhaps, might be cleared up by studying history.

It would have been more practical to begin with the village, and go on next to the arrondissement, the department, and the province; but, as Chavignolles had no annals, it was absolutely necessary to stick to universal history. It was rendered embarrassing by such a variety of details that one ought only to select its beautiful features. For Greek history there are: "We shall fight in the shade," the banishment of Aristides by the envious, and the confidence of Alexander in his physician. For Roman, the geese of the Capitol, the tripod of Scævola, the barrel of Regulus. The bed of roses of Guatimozin is noteworthy for America. As for France, it supplies the vase of Soissons, the oak of St. Louis, the death of Joan of Arc, the boiled hen of Bearnais—you have only too

extensive a field to select from, not to speak of *À moi d'Auvergne!* and the shipwreck of the *Vengeur*.

Victor confused the men, the centuries, and the countries. Pécuchet, however, was not going to plunge him into subtle considerations, and the mass of facts is a veritable labyrinth. He confined himself to the names of the kings of France. Victor forgot them through not knowing the dates. But, if Dumouchel's system of mnemonics had been insufficient for themselves, what would it be for him! Conclusion: history can be learned only by reading a great deal. He would do this.

Drawing is useful where there are numerous details; and Pécuchet was courageous enough to try to learn it himself from Nature by working at the landscape forthwith. A bookseller at Bayeux sent him paper, india-rubber, pasteboard, pencils, and fixtures, with a view to the works, which, framed and glazed, would adorn the museum.

Out of bed at dawn, they started each with a piece of bread in his pocket, and much time was lost in finding a suitable scene. Pécuchet wished to reproduce what he found under his feet, the extreme horizon, and the clouds, all at the same time; but the backgrounds always got the better of the foregrounds; the river tumbled down from the sky; the shepherd walked over his flock; and a dog asleep looked as if he were hunting. For his part, he gave it up, remembering that he had read this definition:

"Drawing is composed of three things: line, grain, and fine graining, and, furthermore, the powerful touch. But it is only the master who can give the powerful touch."

He rectified the line, assisted in the graining process, watched over the fine graining, and waited for the opportunity of giving the powerful touch. It never arrived, so incomprehensible was the pupil's landscape.

Victorine, who was very lazy, used to yawn over the multiplication table. Mademoiselle Reine showed her how to stitch, and when she was marking linen she lifted her fingers so nicely that Bouvard afterwards had not the heart to torment her with his lesson in ciphering. One of these days they would resume it. No doubt arithmetic and sewing are necessary in a household; but it is cruel, Pécuchet urged, to bring up girls merely with an eye to the husbands they might marry. Not all of them are destined for wedlock; if we wish them later to do without men, we ought to teach them many things.

The sciences can be taught in connection with the commonest objects; for instance, by telling what wine is made of; and when the explanation was given, Victor and Victorine had to repeat it. It was the same with groceries, furniture, illumination; but for them light meant the lamp, and it had nothing in common with the spark of a flint, the flame of a candle, the radiance of the moon.

One day Victorine asked, "How is it that wood burns?" Her masters looked at each other in confusion. The theory of combustion was beyond them.

Another time Bouvard, from the soup to the cheese, kept talking of nutritious elements, and dazed the two youngsters with fibrine, caseine, fat and gluten.

After this, Pécuchet desired to explain to them how the blood is renewed, and he became puzzled over the explanation of circulation.

The dilemma is not an easy one; if you start with facts, the simplest require proofs that are too involved, and by laying down principles first, you begin with the absolute — faith.

How is it to be solved? By combining the two methods of teaching, the rational and the empirical; but a double means towards a single end is the reverse of method. Ah! so much the worse, then.

To initiate them in natural history, they tried some scientific excursions.

"You see," said they, pointing towards an ass, a horse, an ox, "beasts with four feet — they are called quadrupeds. As a rule, birds have feathers, reptiles scales, and butterflies belong to the insect class."

They had a net to catch them with, and Pécuchet, holding the insect up daintily, made them take notice of the four wings, the six claws, the two feelers, and of its bony proboscis, which drinks in the nectar of flowers.

He gathered herbs behind the ditches, mentioned their names, and, when he did not know them, invented them, in order to keep up his prestige. Besides, nomenclature is the least important thing in botany.

He wrote this axiom on the blackboard: "Every plant has leaves, a calyx, and a corolla enclosing an ovary or pericarp, which contains the seed." Then he ordered his pupils to go looking for plants through the fields, and to collect the first that came to hand.

Victor brought him buttercups; Victorine a bunch of strawberries. He searched vainly for the pericarp.

Bouvard, who distrusted his own knowledge, rummaged in the library, and discovered in *Le Redouté*

des Dames a sketch of an iris in which the ovaries were not situated in the corolla, but beneath the petals in the stem. In their garden were some scratchweeds and lilies-of-the-valley in flower. These rubiaceæ had no calyx; therefore the principle laid down on the blackboard was false.

"It is an exception," said Pécuchet.

But chance led to the discovery of a field-madder in the grass, and it had a calyx.

"Goodness gracious! If the exceptions themselves are not true, what are we to put any reliance on?"

One day, in one of these excursions, they heard the cries of peacocks, glanced over the wall, and at first did not recognise their own farm. The barn had a slate roof; the railings were new; the pathways had been metalled.

Père Gouy made his appearance.

"'Tisn't possible! Is it you?"

How many sad stories he had to tell of the past three years, amongst others the death of his wife! As for himself, he had always been as strong as an oak.

"Come in a minute."

It was early in April, and in the three fruit-gardens rows of apple trees in full blossom showed their white and red clusters; the sky, which was like blue satin, was perfectly cloudless. Table-cloths, sheets, and napkins hung down, vertically attached to tightly-drawn ropes by wooden pins. Père Gouy lifted them as they passed; and suddenly they came face to face with Madame Bordin, bareheaded, in a dressing-gown, and Marianne offering her armfuls of linen.

"Your servant, gentlemen. Make yourselves at home. As for me, I shall sit down; I am worn out."

The farmer offered to get some refreshment for the entire party.

"Not now," said she; "I am too hot."

Pécuchet consented, and disappeared into the cellar with Père Gouy, Marianne and Victor.

Bouvard sat down on the grass beside Madame Bordin.

He received the annual payment punctually; he had nothing to complain of; and he wished for nothing more.

The bright sunshine lighted up her profile. One of her black head-bands had come loose, and the little curls behind her neck clung to her brown skin, moistened with perspiration. With each breath her bosom heaved. The smell of the grass mingled with the odour of her solid flesh, and Bouvard felt a revival of his attachment, which filled him with joy. Then he complimented her about her property.

She was greatly charmed with it; and she told him about her plans. In order to enlarge the farmyard, she intended to take down the upper bank.

Victorine was at that moment climbing up the slopes, and gathering primroses, hyacinths, and violets, without being afraid of an old horse that was browsing on the grass at her feet.

"Isn't she pretty?" said Bouvard.

"Yes, she is pretty, for a little girl."

And the widow heaved a sigh, which seemed charged with life-long regret.

"You might have had one yourself."

She hung down her head.

"That depended on you."

"How?"

He gave her such a look that she grew purple, as if at the sensation of a rough caress; but, immediately fanning herself with her pocket-handkerchief:

"You have let the opportunity slip, my dear."

"I don't quite understand." And without rising he drew closer to her.

She remained looking down at him for some time; then smiling, with moist eyes:

"It is your fault."

The sheets, hanging around them, hemmed them in, like the curtains of a bed.

He leaned forward on his elbow, so that his face touched her knees.

"Why?—eh?—why?"

And as she remained silent, while he was in a condition in which words cost nothing, he tried to justify himself; accused himself of folly, of pride.

"Forgive me! Let everything be as it was before. Do you wish it?" And he caught her hand, which she allowed to remain in his.

A sudden gust of wind blew up the sheets, and they saw two peacocks, a male and a female. The female stood motionless, with her tail in the air. The male marched around her, erected his tail into a fan and bridled up, making a clucking noise.

Bouvard was clasping the hand of Madame Bordin. She very quickly loosed herself. Before them, open-mouthed and, as it were, petrified, was young Victor staring at them; a short distance away Victorine, stretched on her back, in the full light of day, was inhaling all the flowers which she had gathered.

The old horse, frightened by the peacocks, broke one of the lines with a kick, got his legs entangled

in it, and, galloping through the farmyard, dragged the washed linen after him.

At Madame Bordin's wild screams Marianne rushed up. Père Gouy abused his horse: "Fool of a beast! Old bag of bones! Infernal thief of a horse!"—kicked him in the belly, and lashed his ears with the handle of a whip.

Bouvard was shocked at seeing the animal maltreated.

The countryman, in answer to his protest, said:

"I've a right to do it; he's my own."

This was no justification. And Pécuchet, coming on the scene, added that animals too have their rights, for they have souls like ourselves—if indeed ours have any existence.

"You are an impious man!" exclaimed Madame Bordin.

Three things excited her anger: the necessity for beginning the washing over again, the outrage on her faith, and the fear of having been seen just now in a compromising attitude.

"I thought you were more liberal," said Bouvard.

She replied, in a magisterial manner, "I don't like scamps."

And Gouy laid the blame on them for having injured his horse, whose nostrils were bleeding. He growled in a smothered voice:

"Damned unlucky people! I was going to put him away when they turned up."

The two worthies took themselves off, shrugging their shoulders.

Victor asked them why they had been vexed with Gouy.

"He abuses his strength, which is wrong."

"Why is it wrong?"

Could it be that the children had no idea of justice? Perhaps so.

And the same evening, Pécuchet, with Bouvard sitting at his right, and facing the two pupils with some notes in his hand, began a course of lectures on morality.

"This science teaches us to exercise control over our actions.

"They have two motives — pleasure and interest, and a third, more imperious — duty.

"Duties are divided into two classes: first, duties towards ourselves, which consist in taking care of our bodies, protecting ourselves against all injury." (They understood this perfectly.) "Secondly, duties towards others; that is to say, to be always loyal, good-natured, and even fraternal, the human race being only one single family. A thing often pleases us which is injurious to our fellows; interest is a different thing from good, for good is in itself irreducible." (The children did not comprehend.) He put off the sanction of duties until the next occasion.

In the entire lecture, according to Bouvard, he had not defined "good."

"Why do you wish to define it? We feel it."

So, then, the lessons of morality would suit only moral people — and Pécuchet's course did not go further.

They made their pupils read little tales tending to inspire them with the love of virtue. They plagued Victor to death.

In order to strike his imagination, Pécuchet suspended from the walls of his apartment representations of the lives of the good person and the bad

person respectively. The first, Adolphe, embraced his mother, studied German, assisted a blind man, and was admitted into the Polytechnic School. The bad person, Eugène, began by disobeying his father, had a quarrel in a café, beat his wife, fell down dead drunk, smashed a cupboard — and a final picture represented him in jail, where a gentleman, accompanied by a young lad, pointed him out, saying, "You see, my son, the dangers of misconduct."

But for the children, the future had no existence. In vain were their minds saturated with the maxim that "work is honourable," and that "the rich are sometimes unhappy." They had known workmen in no way honoured, and had recollections of the château, where life seemed good. The pangs of remorse were depicted for them with so much exaggeration that they smelled humbug, and after that became distrustful. Attempts were then made to govern their conduct by a sense of honour, the idea of public opinion, and the sentiment of glory, by holding up to their admiration great men; above all, men who made themselves useful, like Belzunce, Franklin, and Jacquard. Victor displayed no longing to resemble them.

One day, when he had done a sum in addition without a mistake, Bouvard sewed to his jacket a ribbon to symbolise the Cross. He strutted about with it; but, when he forgot about the death of Henry IV., Pécucnet put an ass's cap on his head. Victor began to bray with so much violence and for so long a time, that it was found necessary to take off his pasteboard ears.

Like him, his sister showed herself vain of praise, and indifferent to blame.

In order to make them more sensitive, a black cat was given to them, that they might take care of it; and two or three coppers were presented to them, so that they might bestow alms. They thought the requirement unjust; this money belonged to them.

In compliance with the wish of the pedagogues, they called Bouvard "my uncle," and Pécuchet "good friend;" but they "thee'd" and "thou'd" them, and half the lessons were usually lost in disputes.

Victorine ill-treated Marcel, mounted on his back, dragged him by the hair. In order to make game of his hare-lip, she spoke through her nose like him; and the poor fellow did not venture to complain, so fond was he of the little girl. One evening his hoarse voice was unusually raised. Bouvard and Pécuchet went down to the kitchen. The two pupils were staring at the chimneypiece, and Marcel, with clasped hands, was crying out:

"Take him away! It's too much—it's too much!"

The lid of the pot flew off like the bursting of a shell. A greyish mass bounded towards the ceiling, then wriggled about frantically, emitting fearful howls.

They recognised the cat, quite emaciated, with its hair gone, its tail like a piece of string, and its dilated eyes starting out of its head. They were as white as milk, vacant, so to speak, and yet glaring.

The hideous animal continued its howling till it flung itself into the fireplace, disappeared, then rolled back in the middle of the cinders lifeless.

It was Victor who had perpetrated this atrocity; and the two worthy men recoiled, pale with stupe-

faction and horror. To the reproaches which they addressed to him, he replied, as the keeper had done with reference to his son and the farmer with reference to his horse: "Well! since it's my own," without ceremony and with an air of innocence, in the placidity of a satiated instinct.

The boiling water from the pot was scattered over the floor, and saucepans, tongs, and candlesticks lay everywhere thrown about.

Marcel was some time cleaning up the kitchen, and his masters and he buried the poor cat in the garden under the pagoda.

After this Bouvard and Pécuchet had a long chat about Victor. The paternal blood was showing itself. What were they to do? To give him back to M. de Faverges or to entrust him to others would be an admission of impotence. Perhaps he would reform.

No matter! It was a doubtful hope; and they no longer felt any tenderness towards him. What a pleasure it would have been, however, to have near them a youth interested in their ideas, whose progress they could watch, who would by and by have become a brother to them! But Victor lacked intellect, and heart still more. And Pécuchet sighed, with his hands clasped over his bent knee.

"The sister is not much better," said Bouvard.

He pictured to himself a girl of nearly fifteen years, with a refined nature, a playful humour, adorning the house with the elegant tastes of a young lady; and, as if he had been her father and she had just died, the poor man began to weep.

Then, seeking an excuse for Victor, he quoted Rousseau's opinion: "The child has no responsibility, and cannot be moral or immoral."

Pécuchet's view was that these children had reached the age of discretion, and that they should study some method whereby they could be corrected. Bentham lays down that a punishment, in order to be effectual, should be in proportion to the offence —its natural consequence. The child has broken a pane of glass—a new one will not be put in: let him suffer from cold. If, not being hungry any longer, he asks to be served again, give way to him: a fit of indigestion will quickly make him repent. Suppose he is lazy—let him remain without work: boredom of itself will make him go back to it.

But Victor would not endure cold; his constitution could stand excesses; and doing nothing would agree with him.

They adopted the reverse system: medicinal punishment. Impositions were given to him; he only became more idle. They deprived him of sweet things; his greediness for them redoubled. Perhaps irony might have success with him? On one occasion, when he came to breakfast with dirty hands, Bouvard jeered at him, calling him a "gay cavalier," a "dandy," "yellow gloves." Victor listened with lowering brow, suddenly turned pale, and flung his plate at Bouvard's head; then, wild at having missed him, made a rush at him. It took three men to hold him. He rolled himself on the floor, trying to bite. Pécuchet, at some distance, sprinkled water over him out of a carafe: he immediately calmed down; but for two days he was hoarse. The method had not proved of any use.

They adopted another. At the least symptom of anger, treating him as if he were ill, they put him to

bed. Victor was quite contented there, and showed it by singing.

One day he took out of its place in the library an old cocoanut, and was beginning to split it open, when Pécuchet came up:

"My cocoanut!"

It was a memento of Dumouchel! He had brought it from Paris to Chavignolles. He raised his arms in indignation. Victor burst out laughing. "Good friend" could not stand it any longer, and with one good box sent him rolling to the end of the room, then, quivering with emotion, went to complain to Bouvard.

Bouvard rebuked him.

"Are you crazy with your cocoanut? Blows only brutalise; terror enervates. You are disgracing yourself!"

Pécuchet returned that corporal chastisements were sometimes indispensable. Pestalozzi made use of them; and the celebrated Melancthon confesses that without them he would have learned nothing.

His friend observed that cruel punishments, on the other hand, had driven children to suicide. He had in his reading found examples of it.

Victor had barricaded himself in his room.

Bouvard parleyed with him outside the door, and, to make him open it, promised him a plum tart.

From that time he grew worse.

There remained a method extolled by Monseigneur Dupanloup: "the severe look." They tried to impress on their countenances a dreadful expression, and they produced no effect.

"We have no longer any resource but to try religion."

Pécuchet protested. They had banished it from their programme.

But reasoning does not satisfy every want. The heart and the imagination desire something else. The supernatural is for many souls indispensable. So they resolved to send the children to catechism.

Reine offered to conduct them there. She again came to the house, and knew how to make herself liked by her caressing ways.

Victorine suddenly changed, became shy, honey-tongued, knelt down before the Madonna, admired the sacrifice of Abraham, and sneered disdainfully at the name of Protestant.

She said that fasting had been enjoined upon her. They made inquiries: it was not true. On the feast of Corpus Christi some damask violets disappeared from one of the flower-beds to decorate the processional altar: she impudently denied having cut them. At another time she took from Bouvard twenty sous, which she placed at vesper-time in the sacristan's collecting-plate.

They drew from this the conclusion that morality is distinguishable from religion; when it has not another basis, its importance is secondary.

One evening, while they were dining, M. Marescot entered. Victor fled immediately.

The notary, having declined to sit down, told what had brought him there.

Young Touache had beaten — all but killed — his son. As Victor's origin was known, and as he was unpopular, the other brats called him "Convict," and not long since he had given Master Arnold Marescot a drubbing, which was an insult. "Dear Arnold" bore the marks of it on his body.

"His mother is in despair, his clothes are in rags, his health is imperilled. What are we coming to?"

The notary insisted on severe chastisement, and, amongst other things, on Victor being henceforth kept away from catechism, to prevent fresh collisions.

Bouvard and Pécuchet, although wounded by his haughty tone, promised everything he wished—yielded.

Had Victor obeyed a sentiment of honour or of revenge? In any case, he was no coward.

But his brutality frightened them. Music softens manners. Pécuchet conceived the notion of teaching him the solfeggio.

Victor had much difficulty in reading the notes readily and not confounding the terms *adagio, presto,* and *sforzando.* His master strove to explain to him the gamut, perfect harmony, the diatonic, the chromatic, and the two kinds of intervals called major and minor.

He made him stand up straight, with his chest advanced, his shoulders thrown back, his mouth wide open, and, in order to teach by example, gave out intonations in a voice that was out of tune. Victor's voice came forth painfully from his larynx, so contracted was it. When the bar began with a crotchet rest, he started either too soon or too late.

Nevertheless Pécuchet took up an air in two parts. He used a rod as a substitute for a fiddlestick, and moved his arm like a conductor, as if he had an orchestra behind him; but, engaged as he was in two tasks, he sometimes made a mistake; his blunder led to others on the part of the pupil; and, knitting their brows, straining the muscles of their

necks, they went on at random down to the end of the page.

At length Pécuchet said to Victor:

"You're not likely to shine in a choral society."

And he abandoned the teaching of music.

Besides, perhaps Locke is right: "Music is associated with so much profligate company that it is better to occupy oneself with something else."

Without desiring to make an author of him, it would be convenient for Victor to know how to despatch a letter. A reflection stopped them: the epistolary style cannot be acquired, for it belongs exclusively to women.

They next thought of cramming his memory with literary fragments, and, perplexed about making selections, consulted Madame Campan's work. She recommends the scene of Eliakim, the choruses in *Esther,* and the entire works of Jean Baptiste Rousseau.

These are a little old-fashioned. As for romances, she prohibits them, as depicting the world under too favourable colours. However, she permits *Clarissa Harlowe* and *The Father of a Family,* by Mrs. Opie.* Who is this Mrs. Opie?

They did not find her name in the Biographie of Michaud.

There remained fairy tales. "They would be expecting palaces of diamonds," said Pécuchet. Literature develops the intellect, but excites the passions.

Victorine was sent away from catechism on account of her conduct. She had been caught kissing

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*This is possibly a reference to that once celebrated specimen of English didactic fiction, *Fathers and Daughters*, by Mrs. Amelia Opie.— TRANSLATOR.

the notary's son, and Reine made no joke of it: her face looked grave under her cap with its big frills.

After such a scandal, why keep a young girl so corrupted?

Bouvard and Pécuchet called the curé an old fool. His housekeeper defended him, muttering:

"We know you!—we know you!"

They made a sharp rejoinder, and she went off rolling her eyes in a fearful manner.

Victorine was, in fact, smitten with a fancy for Arnold, so nice did she think him, with his embroidered collar, his velvet jacket, and his well-scented hair; and she had been bringing bouquets to him up to the time when Zephyrin told about her.

What foolishness was exhibited regarding this adventure, the two children being perfectly innocent!

The two guardians thought Victor required a stirring amusement like hunting; this would lead to the expense of a gun, of a dog. They thought it better to fatigue him, in order to tame the exuberance of his animal spirits, and went in for coursing in the fields.

The young fellow escaped from them, although they relieved each other. They could do nothing more; and in the evening they had not the strength to hold up the newspaper.

Whilst they were waiting for Victor they talked to the passers-by, and through the sheer necessity of playing the pedagogue, they tried to teach them hygiene, deplored the injuries from floods and the waste of manures, thundered against such superstitions as leaving the skeleton of a blackbird in a barn, putting consecrated wood at the end of a stable and a bag of worms on the big toes of people suffering from fever.

They next took to inspecting wet nurses, and were incensed at their management of babies: some soaked them in gruel, causing them to die of exhaustion; others stuffed them with meat before they were six months old, and so they fell victims to indigestion; several cleaned them with their own spittle; all managed them barbarously.

When they saw over a door an owl that had been crucified, they went into the farmhouse and said:

"You are wrong; these animals live on rats and field-mice. There has been found in a screech-owl's stomach a quantity of caterpillars' larvæ."

The country-folk knew them from having seen them, in the first place, as physicians, then searching for old furniture, and afterwards looking for stones; and they replied:

"Come, now, you pair of play-actors! don't try to teach us."

Their conviction was shaken, for the sparrows cleanse the kitchen-gardens, but eat up the cherries. The owls devour insects, and at the same time bats, which are useful; and, if the moles eat the slugs, they upset the soil. There was one thing of which they were certain: that all game should be destroyed as fatal to agriculture.

One evening, as they were passing along by the wood of Faverges, they found themselves in front of Sorel's house, at the side of the road. Sorel was gesticulating in the presence of three persons. The first was a certain Dauphin, a cobbler, small, thin, and with a sly expression of countenance; the second, Père Aubain, a village porter, wore an old yellow frock-coat, with a pair of coarse blue linen trousers;

the third, Eugéne, a man-servant employed by M. Marescot, was distinguished by his beard cut like that of a magistrate.

Sorel was showing them a noose in copper wire attached to a silk thread, which was held by a clamp — what is called a snare — and he had discovered the cobbler in the act of setting it.

"You are witnesses, are you not?"

Eugène lowered his chin by way of assent, and Père Aubain replied:

"Once you say so."

What enraged Sorel was that anyone should have the audacity to set up a snare at the entrance of his lodge, the rascal imagining that one would have no idea of suspecting it in such a place.

Dauphin adopted the blubbering system:

"I was walking over it; I even tried to break it." They were always accusing him. They had a grudge against him; he was most unlucky.

Sorel, without answering him, had drawn out of his pocket a note-book and a pen and ink, in order to make out an official report.

"Oh, no!" said Pécuchet.

Bouvard added: "Let him go. He is a decent fellow."

"He — a poacher!"

"Well, such things will happen."

And they proceeded to defend poaching: "We know, to start with, that the rabbits nibble at the young sprouts, and that the hares destroy the corn crops — except, perhaps, the woodcock ——"

"Let me alone, now." And the gamekeeper went on writing with clenched teeth.

"What obstinacy!" murmured Bouvard.

"Another word, and I shall send for the gendarmes!"

"You are an ill-mannered fellow!" said Pécuchet.

"You are no great things!" retorted Sorel.

Bouvard, forgetting himself, referred to him as a blockhead, a bully; and Eugène kept repeating, "Peace! peace! let us respect the law"; while Père Aubain was groaning three paces away from them on a heap of pebbles.

Disturbed by these voices, all the dogs of the pack rushed out of their kennels. Through the railings their black snouts could be seen, and, rushing hither and thither they kept barking loudly.

"Don't plague me further," cried their master, "or I'll make them go for your breeches!"

The two friends departed, satisfied, however, with having upheld progress and civilisation.

Next day a summons was served on them to appear at the police court for offering insults to the gamekeeper, and to pay a hundred francs' compensation, "reserving an appeal to the public administration, having regard to the contraventions committed by them. Costs: 6 francs 75 centimes.—TIERCELIN, Summoner."

Wherefore a public administration? Their heads became giddy; then, becoming calm, they set about preparing their defence.

On the day named, Bouvard and Pécuchet repaired to the court-house an hour too early. No one was there; chairs and three cushioned seats surrounded an oval table covered with a cloth; a niche had been made in the wall for the purpose of placing a stove there; and the Emperor's bust, which was on a pedestal, overlooked the scene.

They strolled up to the top room of the building, where there was a fire-engine, a number of flags, and in a corner, on the floor, other plaster busts—the great Napoleon without a diadem; Louis XVIII. with epaulets on a dress-coat; Charles X., recognisable by his hanging lip; Louis Philippe, with arched eyebrows and hair dressed in pyramid fashion, the slope of the roof grazing the nape of his neck; and all these objects were befouled by flies and dust. This spectacle had a demoralising effect on Bouvard and Pécuchet. Governing powers excited their pity as they made their way back to the main hall.

There they found Sorel and the field-keeper, the one wearing his badge on his arm, and the other his military cap.

A dozen persons were talking, having been summoned for not having swept in front of their houses, or for having let their dogs go at large, or neglecting to attach lanterns to their carts, or for keeping a public-house open during mass-time.

At length Coulon presented himself, wrapped in a robe of black serge and wearing a round cap with velvet edgings. His clerk sat down at his left, the mayor, scarfed, at his right; and shortly afterwards the case of Sorel against Bouvard and Pécuchet was called.

Louis-Martial-Eugène Lenepveur, valet at Chavignolles (Calvados), availed himself of his character as a witness to unburden himself of all he knew about a great many things that were foreign to the issue.

Nicolas-Juste Aubain, day-labourer, was afraid both of displeasing Sorel and of injuring "these gentlemen." He had heard abusive words, and yet he had his doubts about it. He pleaded that he was deaf.

The justice of the peace made him sit down; then, addressing himself to the gamekeeper: "Do you persist in your declarations?"

"Certainly."

Coulon then asked the two defendants what they had to say.

Bouvard maintained that he had not insulted Sorel, but that in taking the poacher's part he had vindicated the rights of the peasantry. He recalled the abuses of feudal times and the ruinous huntings of the nobles.

"No matter! The contravention——"

"Allow me to stop you," exclaimed Pécuchet.

The words "contravention," "crime," and "delict" were of no value. To seek in this way to class punishable acts was to take an arbitrary basis. As much as to say to citizens: "Don't bother yourself as to the value of your actions; that is determined by the punishment inflicted by authority." However, the penal code appeared to him an absurd production devoid of principles.

"That may be," replied Coulon; and he proceeded to pronounce his judgment.

But here Foureau, who represented the public administration, arose. They had outraged the gamekeeper in the exercise of his functions. If no regard were shown for propriety, everything would be destroyed.

"In short, may it please Monsieur the Justice of the Peace to apply the maximum penalty."

This was ten francs, in the form of damages to Sorel.

"Bravo!" exclaimed Bouvard.

Coulon had not finished.

"Impose on them, in addition, a fine of five francs for having been guilty of the contravention mentioned by the public administration."

Pécuchet turned around to the audience:

"The fine is a trifle to the rich man, but a disaster to the poor man. As for myself, it matters nothing to me."

And he presented the appearance of defying the court.

"Really," said Coulon, "I am astonished that people of intelligence——"

"The law dispenses you from the possession of it," retorted Pécuchet. "The justice of the peace occupies his post indefinitely, while the judge of the supreme court is reputed capable up to seventy-five years, and the judge of first instance is no longer so at seventy."

But, at a gesture from Foureau, Placquevent advanced.

They protested.

"Ah! if you were appointed by competition!"

"Or by the General Council!"

"Or a committee of experts, and according to a proper list!"

Placquevent moved them on, and they went out while the other defendants' names were being called, believing that they had made a good show in the course of these vile proceedings.

To give vent to their indignation they went that evening to Beljambe's hostelry. His café was empty, the principal customers being in the habit of leaving about ten o'clock. The lamp had been lowered; the walls and the counter seemed shrouded in a fog. A female attendant came on the scene. It was Mélie.

She did not appear agitated, and, smiling, she poured them out two bocks. Pécuchet, ill at ease, quickly left the establishment.

Bouvard came back there alone, entertained some of the villagers with sarcasms at the mayor's expense, and after that went into the smoking-room.

Six months later Dauphin was acquitted for want of evidence. What a shame! These very witnesses who had been believed when testifying against them were now regarded with suspicion. And their anger knew no bounds when the registrar gave them notice to pay the fine. Bouvard attacked the registry as injurious to property.

"You are mistaken," said the collector. "Why, it bears a third of the public expenditure!"

"I would have proceedings with regard to taxes less vexatious, a better system of land registration, alterations in the law as to mortgages, and would abolish the Bank of France, which has the privilege of usury."

Girbal, not being strong on the subject, let the argument fall to the ground, and departed. However, Bouvard made himself agreeable to the innkeeper; he would attract a crowd around him; and, while he was waiting for the guests, he chatted familiarly with the barmaid.

He gave utterance to odd ideas on primary education. On leaving school, pupils ought to be capable of nursing the sick, understanding scientific discoveries, and taking an interest in the arts. The requirements of his programme made him fall out with Petit; and he offended the captain by maintaining that soldiers, instead of losing their time with drilling, would be better occupied in growing vegetables.

When the question of free trade turned up he brought Pécuchet along with him, and the whole winter there were in the café angry looks, contemptuous attitudes, insults and vociferations, with blows of fists on the table that made the beer-glasses jump.

Langlois and the other merchants defended national commerce; Oudot, owner of a spinning factory, and Mathieu, a goldsmith, national industry; the landowners and the farmers, national agriculture: everyone claiming privileges for himself to the detriment of the public at large.

The observations of Bouvard and Pécuchet had an alarming effect.

As they were accused of ignoring the practical side of life, of having a tendency towards levelling, and of immorality, they developed these three ideas: to replace the family name by a registered number; to arrange the French people in a hierarchy, and in such a way that, in order to preserve his grade, it would be necessary for one to submit from time to time to an examination; no more punishments, no more rewards, but in every village an individual chronicle of all persons living there, which would pass on to posterity.

Their system was treated with disdain. They wrote an article about it for the Bayeux daily paper, drew up a note to the prefect, a petition to the Chambers, and a memorial to the Emperor.

The newspaper did not publish their article.

The prefect did not condescend to reply.

The Chambers were silent; and they waited a long time for a communication from the Tuileries.

What, then, was the Emperor occupying his time with?

With women, no doubt.

Foureau, on the part of the sub-prefect, suggested the desirability of more reserve.

They laughed at the sub-prefect, the prefect, the councillors of the prefecture, even the council of state. Administrative justice was a monstrosity, for the administration by means of favours and threats unjustly controls its functionaries. In short, they came to be regarded as a nuisance, and the leading men of the place gave injunctions to Beljambe not to entertain two such fellows.

At this period, Bouvard and Pécuchet were burning to signalise themselves by a work which would dazzle their neighbours; and they saw nothing better than plans for the embellishment of Chavignolles.

Three fourths of the houses should be demolished. They would construct in the centre of the village a monumental square, on the way to Falaise a hospital, slaughter-houses on the way to Caen, and at the "Cows' Pass" a Roman church of many colours.

Pécuchet manufactured a colouring mixture with Indian ink, and did not forget in preparing his plans to give a yellow tint to the woods, a red to the buildings, and a green to the meadows, for the pictures of an ideal Chavignolles pursued him in his day-dreams, and he came back to them as he lay on his mattress.

Bouvard was awakened by him one night.

"Are you unwell?"

Pécuchet stammered, "Haussmann prevents me from going to sleep."

About this time he received a letter from Dumouchel to know the cost of sea-baths on the Norman coast.

"Let him go about his business with his baths! Have we any time to write?"

And, when they had procured a land-surveyor's chain, a semicircle, a water-level, and a compass, they began at other studies.

They encroached on private properties. The inhabitants were frequently surprised to see the pair fixing stakes in the ground for surveying purposes. Bouvard and Pécuchet announced their plans, and what would be the outcome of them, with the utmost self-complacency. The people became uneasy, for, perchance, authority might at length fall in with these men's views! Sometimes they rudely drove them away.

Victor scaled the walls and crept up to the roof to hang up signals there; he exhibited good-will, and even a degree of enthusiasm.

They were also better satisfied with Victorine.

When she was ironing the linen she hummed in a sweet voice as she moved her smoothing-iron over the board, interested herself in looking after the household, and made a cap for Bouvard, with a well-pointed peak that won compliments for her from Romiche.

This man was one of those tailors who go about mending clothes in farmhouses. He was taken into the house for a fortnight.

Hunchbacked, with bloodshot eyes, he made up for his bodily defects by a facetious disposition. While the masters were out, he used to amuse Márcel and Victorine by telling them funny stories. He would put out his tongue as far as his chin, imitate the cuckoo, or give exhibitions of ventriloquism; and at night, saving the cost of an inn, he went to sleep in the bakehouse.

Now, one morning, at a very early hour, Bouvard, being cold, happened to go there to get chips to light his fire.

What he saw petrified him. Behind the remains of the chest, upon a straw mattress, Romiche and Victorine lay asleep together.

He had passed his arm around her waist, and his other hand, long as that of an ape, clutched one of her knees. She was smiling, stretched on her back. Her fair hair hung loose, and the whiteness of the dawn threw its pale light upon the pair.

Bouvard for a moment felt as if he had received a blow in the chest; then a sense of shame prevented him from making a single movement. He was oppressed by painful reflections.

"So young! Lost! lost!" He then went to awaken Pécuchet, and briefly told him everything.

"Ah! the wretch!"

"We cannot help it. Be calm!" And for some time they remained sighing, one after the other—Bouvard, with his coat off and his arms folded; Pécuchet, at the side of his bed, sitting barefooted in a cotton nightcap.

Romiche should leave that very day, when his work was finished. They would pay him in a haughty fashion, and in silence.

But Providence had some spite against them.

Marcel, a short time afterwards, led them to Victor's room and showed them at the bottom of his chest of drawers a twenty-franc piece. The youngster had asked him to get the change of it.

Where did it come from? No doubt it was got by a theft committed while they were going about as engineers. But in order to restore it they would

require to know the person; and if some one came to claim it they would look like accomplices.

At length, having sent for Victor, they ordered him to open his drawer: the napoleon was no longer there. He pretended not to understand. A short time before, however, they had seen it, this very coin, and Marcel was incapable of lying. This affair had revolutionised Pécuchet so much that he had, since morning, kept in his pocket a letter for Bouvard:

"Sir,—Fearing lest M. Pécuchet may be ill, I have recourse to your kindness——"

"Whose is the signature, then?"

"Olympe Dumouchel, *née* Charpeau."

She and her husband were anxious to know in which bathing-place—Courseulles, Langrune, or Lucques—the best society was to be found, which was least noisy, and as to the means of transport, the cost of washing, etc.

This importunity made them angry with Dumouchel; then weariness plunged them into deeper despondency.

They went over all the pains that they had taken—so many lessons, precautions, torments!

"And to think that we intended at one time to make Victorine a teacher, and Victor an overseer of works!"

"Ah! how deceived we were in her!"

"If she is vicious, it is not the fault of the lessons she got."

"For my part, to make her virtuous, I would have learned Cartouche's biography."

"Perhaps they needed family life—the care of a mother?"

"I was like one to them," protested Bouvard.

"Alas!" replied Pécuchet. "But there are natures bereft of moral sense; and education in that case can do nothing."

"Ah! yes, 'tis a fine thing, education!"

As the orphans had not learned any trade, they would seek two situations for them as servants; and then, with the help of God, they would have nothing more to do with them.

And henceforth "My uncle" and "Good friend" made them take their meals in the kitchen.

But soon they grew restless, their minds feeling the need of work, their existence of an aim.

Besides, what does one failure prove? What had proved abortive in the case of children might be more successful with men. And they conceived the idea of preparing a course of lectures for adults.

In order to explain their views, a conference would be necessary. The great hall of the inn would be perfectly suitable for this purpose.

Beljambe, as deputy mayor, was afraid to compromise himself, refused at first, then, thinking that he might make something out of it, changed his mind, and sent word to that effect by his servant-maid.

Bouvard, in the excess of his joy, kissed her on both cheeks.

The mayor was absent. The other deputy, M. Marescot, entirely taken up with his office, would pay little attention to the conference. So it was to take place; and, to the beating of the drum, the hour was announced as three o'clock on the following Sunday.

It was only on the day before that they thought about their costumes. Pécuchet, thank Heaven, had

preserved an old ceremonial coat with a velvet collar, two white cravats, and black gloves. Bouvard put on his blue frock-coat, a nankeen waistcoat and beaver shoes; and they were strongly moved when they had passed through the village and arrived at the hostelry of the Golden Cross.

[*Here Gustave Flaubert's manuscript breaks off.*]

[EXTRACT FROM A PLAN FOUND AMONGST GUSTAVE FLAUBERT'S PAPERS INDICATING THE CONCLUSION OF THE WORK.]

CONFERENCE.

THE inn of the Golden Cross—two wooden galleries at the sides on the first floor, with projecting balcony; main building at the bottom; café on the ground floor, dining-room, billiard-room; the doors and the windows are open.

Crowd: people of rank, ordinary folk.

Bouvard: "The first thing to do is to demonstrate the utility of our project; our studies entitle us to pronounce an opinion."

Discourse by Pécuchet of a pedantic description.

Follies of the government and of the administration. Too much taxation. Two economies to be practised: the suppression of the religious and of the military budget.

He is accused of atheism.

"Quite the contrary; but there is need of a religious reñovation."

Foureau appears on the scene, and insists on dissolving the meeting.

Bouvard excites a laugh at the mayor's expense by recalling his idiotic bounties for owls. Objection to this.

"If it is necessary to destroy animals that injure plants, it would likewise be necessary to destroy the cattle that devour the grass."

Foureau withdraws.

Discourse by Bouvard — in a familiar style.

Prejudices: celibacy of priests, futility of adultery, emancipation of woman.

"Her earrings are the symbol of her former servitude."

Studs of men.

Bouvard and Pécuchet are reproached with the misconduct of their pupils. Also, why did they adopt the children of a convict?

Theory of rehabilitation. They would dine with Touache.

Foureau, having returned, reads, with a view to having revenge on Bouvard, a petition from him to the municipal council, in which he asks for the establishment of a brothel at Chavignolles. (Contemptuous arguments.)

The meeting is brought to a close amid the utmost confusion.

On their return to their own residence, Bouvard and Pécuchet perceive Foureau's man-servant galloping along the road from Falaise at full speed.

They go to bed, quite jaded, without suspecting how many plots are fermenting against them.—Ex-

plain the motives for ill-will towards them actuating the curé, the physician, the mayor, Marescot, the people, everybody.

Next day, at breakfast, they talk about the conference.

Pécuchet sees the future of humanity in dark colours.

The modern man is lessened, and has become a machine.

Final anarchy of the human race. (Buchner, I., II.)

Impossibility of peace. (*Id.*) Savagery traceable to the excess of individualism and the frenzy of science.

Three hypotheses—first: pantheistic radicalism will break every tie with the past, and an inhuman despotism will result; second: if theistic absolutism triumphs, the liberalism with which humanity has been penetrated since the era of reform succumbs—all is thrown back; third: if the convulsions which have been going on since '89 continue, without an end between the two issues, these oscillations will carry us away by their own force. There will be no longer ideal, religion, morality.

The United States will have conquered the earth.

Future of literature.

Universal greed. There will be no longer anything but a debauch of workmen.

End of the world through the cessation of caloric.

Bouvard sees the future of humanity in a bright light. The modern man is progressive.

Europe will be regenerated by Asia. The historic law that civilisation travels from East to West—the part to be played by China—the two humanities will at length be fused.

Future inventions: modes of travelling. Balloons. Submarine barges with glass windows, in an unchanging calm, the sea's agitation being only on the surface. Passing travellers shall see the fishes and the landscapes in the ocean's depths. Animals tamed. All forms of cultivation.

Future of literature (opposite of industrial literature). Future sciences.—How to regulate the force of magnetism.

Paris will become a winter-garden; fruit will be grown on the boulevards; the Seine filtered and heated; abundance of precious stones artificially made; prodigality as to gilding; lighting of houses—light will be stored up, for there are bodies which possess this property, such as sugar, the flesh of certain molluscs, and the phosphorus of Bologna. People will be ordered to cover the fronts of the houses with a phosphorescent substance, and the radiations from them will illuminate the streets.

Disappearance of evil by the disappearance of want. Philosophy will be a religion.

Communion of all peoples. Public fêtes.

People will travel to the heavenly bodies; and when the earth is used up, humanity will set up housekeeping in the stars.

He has hardly finished when the gendarmes make their appearance. Entry of the gendarmes.

At the sight of them the children are terror-stricken, owing to vague recollections.

Marcel's desolation.

Anxiety on the part of Bouvard and Pécuchet. Do they mean to arrest Victor?

The gendarmes exhibit an order to take them into custody.

It is the conference that brought it on. They are accused of having made attempts on religion, on order, having roused people to revolt, etc.

Sudden arrival of M. and Madame Dumouchel with their baggage; they have come to take sea-baths. Dumouchel is not changed; Madame wears spectacles and composes fables. Their perplexity.

The mayor, knowing that the gendarmes are with Bouvard and Pécuchet, arrives, encouraged by their presence.

Gorju, seeing that authority and public opinion are against them, has thought of profiting by it, and escorts Foureau. Assuming Bouvard to be the richer of the pair, he accuses him of having formerly debauched Mélie.

"I? Never!"

Bouvard breaks into a loud exclamation.

"Let him at least make allowance for the child that is about to be born, for she is pregnant."

This second accusation is based on the liberties taken with her by Bouvard at the café.

The public gradually overrun the house.

Barberou, called into the country by a matter connected with his own business, has just learned at the inn what is going on, and comes on the scene.

He believes Bouvard to be guilty, takes him aside, and makes him promise to yield and give the allowance.

Next comes the doctor, the count, Reine, Madame

Bordin, Madame Marescot, under her umbrella, and other persons of rank.

The village brats, outside the railing, scream out and fling stones into the garden. (It is now well kept, and this makes the inhabitants jealous.)

Foureau wishes to drag Bouvard and Pécuchet to prison.

Barberou interposes, and Marescot, the doctor, and the count likewise interpose with insolent pity.

Explain the order for the arrest. The sub-prefect, on receiving Foureau's letter, has despatched an order to take them into custody, in order to frighten them, together with a letter to Marescot and Faverges, saying that they might be let alone if they exhibited repentance.

Vaucorbeil seeks likewise to defend them.

"'Tis rather to a madhouse that they ought to be sent; they are lunatics. I'll write to the prefect."

Everything is settled. Bouvard will make an allowance for Mélie.

The custody of the children cannot be left to them. They refuse to give them up; but as they have not adopted the orphans according to the forms of law, the mayor takes them back.

They display a revolting insensibility. Bouvard and Pécuchet shed tears at it.

M. and Madame Dumouchel go away.

So everything has gone to pieces in their hands.

They no longer have any interest in life.

A good idea cherished secretly by each of them. They conceal it from each other. From time to time they smile when it comes into their heads; then at last communicate it to each other:

To copy as in former times.

Designing of a bureau with a double desk. (For this purpose they seek the services of a joiner. Gorju, who has heard about their invention, proposes to make it. Recall the trunk incident.)

Purchase of books, writing materials, sandaracs, erasers, etc.

They sit down to write.

THE DANCE OF DEATH

THE DANCE OF DEATH

(1838)

"Many words for few things!"
"Death ends all; judgment comes to all."

[This work may be called a prose poem. It is impregnated with the spirit of romanticism, which at the time of writing had a temporary but powerful hold on the mind of Gustave Flaubert.]

Death Speaks.

T NIGHT, in winter, when the snowflakes fall slowly from heaven like great white tears, I raise my voice; its resonance thrills the cypress trees and makes them bud anew. I pause an instant in my swift course over earth; throw myself down among cold tombs; and, while dark-plumaged birds rise suddenly in terror from my side, while the dead slumber peacefully, while cypress branches droop low o'er my head, while all around me weeps or lies in deep repose, my burning eyes rest on the great white clouds, gigantic winding-sheets, unrolling their slow length across the face of heaven.

How many nights, and years, and ages have I journeyed thus! A witness of the universal birth and

of a like decay! Innumerable are the generations I have garnered with my scythe. Like God, I am eternal! The nurse of Earth, I cradle it each night upon a bed both soft and warm. The same recurring feasts; the same unending toil! Each morning I depart, each evening I return, bearing within my mantle's ample folds all that my scythe has gathered. And then I scatter them to the four winds of Heaven!

When high the billows run, when the heavens weep, and shrieking winds lash ocean into madness, then in the turmoil and the tumult do I fling myself upon the surging waves, and lo! the tempest softly cradles me, as in her hammock sways a queen. The foaming waters cool my weary feet, burning from bathing in the falling tears of countless generations that have clung to them in vain endeavour to arrest my steps.

Then, when the storm has ceased, after its roar has calmed me like a lullaby, I bow my head: the hurricane, raging in fury but a moment earlier dies instantly. No longer does it live, but neither do the men, the ships, the navies that lately sailed upon the bosom of the waters.

'Mid all that I have seen and known,—peoples and thrones, loves, glories, sorrows, virtues—what have I ever loved? Nothing—except the mantling shroud that covers me!

My horse! ah, yes! my horse! I love thee too! How thou rushest o'er the world! thy hoofs of steel resounding on the heads bruised by thy speeding feet.

Thy tail is straight and crisp, thine eyes dart flames, the mane upon thy neck flies in the wind, as

on we dash upon our maddened course. Never art thou weary! Never do we rest! Never do we sleep! Thy neighing portends war; thy smoking nostrils spread a pestilence that, mist-like, hovers over earth. Where'er my arrows fly, thou overturnest pyramids and empires, trampling crowns beneath thy hoofs! All men respect thee; nay, adore thee! To invoke thy favour, popes offer thee their triple crowns, and kings their sceptres; peoples, their secret sorrows; poets, their renown. All cringe and kneel before thee, yet thou rushest on over their prostrate forms.

Ah, noble steed! Sole gift from heaven! Thy tendons are of iron, thy head is of bronze. Thou canst pursue thy course for centuries as swiftly as if borne up by eagle's wings; and when, once in a thousand years, resistless hunger comes, thy food is human flesh, thy drink, men's tears. My steed! I love thee as Pale Death alone can love!

Ah! I have lived so long! How many things I know! How many mysteries of the universe are shut within my breast!

Sometimes, after I have hurled a myriad of darts, and, after coursing o'er the world on my pale horse, have gathered many lives, a weariness assails me, and I long to rest.

But on my work must go; my path I must pursue; it leads through infinite space and all the worlds. I sweep away men's plans together with their triumphs, their loves together with their crimes, their very all.

I rend my winding-sheet; a frightful craving tortures me incessantly, as if some serpent stung continually within.

I throw a backward glance, and see the smoke of fiery ruins left behind; the darkness of the night; the agony of the world. I see the graves that are the work of these, my hands; I see the background of the past—'tis nothingness! My weary body, heavy head, and tired feet, sink, seeking rest. My eyes turn towards a glowing horizon, boundless, immense, seeming to grow increasingly in height and depth. I shall devour it, as I have devoured all else.

When, O God! shall I sleep in my turn? When wilt Thou cease creating? When may I, digging my own grave, stretch myself out within my tomb, and, swinging thus upon the world, list the last breath, the death-gasp, of expiring nature?

When that time comes, away my darts and shroud I'll hurl. Then shall I free my horse, and he shall graze upon the grass that grows upon the Pyramids, sleep in the palaces of emperors, drink the last drop of water from the sea, and snuff the odour of the last slow drop of blood! By day, by night, through the countless ages, he shall roam through fields eternal as the fancy takes him; shall leap with one great bound from Atlas to the Himalayas; shall course, in his insolent pride, from heaven to earth; disport himself by caracoling in the dust of crumbled empires; shall speed across the beds of dried-up oceans; shall bound o'er ruins of enormous cities; inhale the void with swelling chest, and roll and stretch at ease.

Then haply, faithful one, weary as I, thou finally shalt seek some precipice from which to cast thyself; shalt halt, panting before the mysterious ocean of infinity; and then, with foaming mouth, dilated nostrils, and extended neck turned towards the horizon, thou shalt, as I, pray for eternal sleep; for repose for thy

fiery feet; for a bed of green leaves, whereon reclining thou canst close thy burning eyes forever. There, waiting motionless upon the brink, thou shalt desire a power stronger than thyself to kill thee at a single blow—shalt pray for union with the dying storm, the faded flower, the shrunken corpse. Thou shalt seek sleep, because eternal life is torture, and the tomb is peace.

Why are we here? What hurricane has hurled us into this abyss? What tempest soon shall bear us away towards the forgotten planets whence we came?

Till then, my glorious steed, thou shalt run thy course; thou mayst please thine ear with the crunching of the heads crushed under thy feet. Thy course is long, but courage! Long time hast thou carried me: but longer time still must elapse, and yet we shall not age.

Stars may be quenched, the mountains crumble, the earth finally wear away its diamond axis; but we two, we alone are immortal, for the impalpable lives forever!

But to-day thou canst lie at my feet, and polish thy teeth against the moss-grown tombs, for Satan has abandoned me, and a power unknown compels me to obey his will. Lo! the dead seek to rise from their graves.

Satan, I love thee! Thou alone canst comprehend my joys and my deliriums. But, more fortunate than I, thou wilt some day, when earth shall be no more, recline and sleep within the realms of space.

But I, who have lived so long, have worked so ceaselessly, with only virtuous loves and solemn thoughts,—I must endure immortality. Man has his

tomb, and glory its oblivion; the day dies into night, but I—!

And I am doomed to lasting solitude upon my way, strewn with the bones of men and marked by ruins. Angels have fellow-angels; demons their companions of darkness; but I hear only sounds of a clanking scythe, my whistling arrows, and my speeding horse. Always the echo of the surging billows that sweep over and engulf mankind!

SATAN.

Dost thou complain,—thou, the most fortunate creature under heaven? The only, splendid, great, unchangeable, eternal one—like God, who is the only Being that equals thee! Dost thou repine, who some day in thy turn shalt disappear forever, after thou hast crushed the universe beneath thy horse's feet?

When God's work of creating has ceased; when the heavens have disappeared and the stars are quenched; when spirits rise from their retreats and wander in the depths with sighs and groans; then, what unpicturable delight for thee! Then shalt thou sit on the eternal thrones of heaven and of hell—shalt overthrow the planets, stars, and worlds—shalt loose thy steed in fields of emeralds and diamonds—shalt make his litter of the wings torn from the angels,—shalt cover him with the robe of righteousness! Thy saddle shall be broidered with the stars of the empyrean,—and then thou wilt destroy it! After thou hast annihilated everything,—when naught remains but empty space,—thy coffin shattered and thine arrows broken, then make thyself a crown of stone from heaven's highest mount, and cast thyself

into the abyss of oblivion. Thy fall may last a million æons, but thou shalt die at last. Because the world must end; all, all must die,—except Satan! Immortal more than God! I live to bring chaos into other worlds!

DEATH.

But thou hast not, as I, this vista of eternal nothingness before thee; thou dost not suffer with this death-like cold, as I.

SATAN.

Nay, but I quiver under fierce and unrelaxing heats of molten lava, which burn the doomed and which e'en I cannot escape.

For thou, at least, hast only to destroy. But I bring birth and I give life. I direct empires and govern the affairs of States and of hearts.

I must be everywhere. The precious metals flow, the diamonds glitter, and men's names resound at my command. I whisper in the ears of women, of poets, and of statesmen, words of love, of glory, of ambition. With Messalina and Nero, at Paris and at Babylon, within the self-same moment do I dwell. Let a new island be discovered, I fly to it ere man can set foot there; though it be but a rock encircled by the sea, I am there in advance of men who will dispute for its possession. I lounge, at the same instant, on a courtesan's couch and on the perfumed beds of emperors. Hatred and envy, pride and wrath, pour from my lips in simultaneous utterance. By night and day I work. While men are burning Christians, I luxuriate voluptuously in baths perfumed

with roses; I race in chariots; yield to deep despair; or boast aloud in pride.

At times I have believed that I embodied the whole world, and all that I have seen took place, in verity, within my being.

Sometimes I weary, lose my reason, and indulge in such mad follies that the most worthless of my minions ridicule me while they pity me.

No creature cares for me; nowhere am I loved,—neither in heaven, of which I am a son, nor yet in hell, where I am lord, nor upon earth, where men deem me a god. Naught do I see but paroxysms of rage, rivers of blood, or maddened frenzy. Ne'er shall my eyelids close in slumber, never my spirit find repose, whilst thou, at least, canst rest thy head upon the cool, green freshness of the grave. Yea, I must ever dwell amid the glare of palaces, must listen to the curses of the starving, or inhale the stench of crimes that cry aloud to heaven.

God, whom I hate, has punished me indeed! But my soul is greater even than His wrath; in one deep sigh I could the whole world draw into my breast, where it would burn eternally, even as I.

When, Lord, shall thy great trumpet sound? Then a great harmony shall hover over sea and hill. Ah! would that I could suffer with humanity; their cries and sobs should drown the sound of mine!

[*Innumerable skeletons, riding in chariots, advance at a rapid pace, with cries of joy and triumph. They drag broken branches and crowns of laurel, from which the dried and yellow leaves fall continually in the wind and the dust.*]

Lo, a triumphal throng from Rome, the Eternal City! Her Coliseum and her Capitol are now two grains of sand that served once as a pedestal; but Death has swung his scythe: the monuments have fallen. Behold! At their head comes Nero, pride of my heart, the greatest poet earth has known!

[*Nero advances in a chariot drawn by twelve skeleton horses. With the sceptre in his hand, he strikes the bony backs of his steeds. He stands erect, his shroud flapping behind him in billowy folds. He turns, as if upon a race-course; his eyes are flaming and he cries loudly:*]

NERO.

Quick! Quick! And faster still, until your feet dash fire from the flinty stones and your nostrils fleck your breasts with foam. What! do not the wheels smoke yet? Hear ye the fanfares, whose sound reached even to Ostia; the clapping of the hands, the cries of joy? See how the populace shower saffron on my head! See how my pathway is already damp with sprayed perfume! My chariot whirls on; the pace is swifter than the wind as I shake the golden reins! Faster and faster! The dust clouds rise; my mantle floats upon the breeze, which in my ears sings "Triumph! triumph!" Faster and faster! Hearken to the shouts of joy, list to the stamping feet and the plaudits of the multitude. Jupiter himself looks down on us from heaven. Faster! yea, faster still!

[*Nero's chariot now seems to be drawn by demons; a black cloud of dust and smoke envelops him; in*

his erratic course he crashes into tombs, and the re-awakened corpses are crushed under the wheels of the chariot, which now turns, comes forward, and stops.]

NERO.

Now let six hundred of my women dance the Grecian Dances silently before me, the while I lave myself with roses in a bath of porphyry. Then let them circle me, with interlacing arms, that I may see on all sides alabaster forms in graceful evolution, swaying like tall reeds bending over an amorous pool.

And I will give the empire and the sea, the Senate, and Olympus, the Capitol, to her who shall embrace me the most ardently; to her whose heart shall throb beneath my own; to her who shall enmesh me in her flowing hair, smile on me sweetest, and enfold me in the warmest clasp; to her who soothing me with songs of love shall waken me to joy and heights of rapture!

Rome shall be still this night; no barque shall cleave the waters of the Tiber, since 'tis my wish to see the mirrored moon on its untroubled face and hear the voice of woman floating over it. Let perfumed breezes pass through all my draperies! Ah, I would die, voluptuously intoxicated.

Then, while I eat of some rare meat, that only I may taste, let some one sing, while damsels, lightly draped, serve me from plates of gold and watch my rest. One slave shall cut her sister's throat, because it is my pleasure — a favourite with the gods — to mingle the perfume of blood with that of food, and cries of victims soothe my nerves.

This night I shall burn Rome. The flames shall light up heaven, and Tiber shall roll in waves of fire!

Then, I shall build of aloes wood a stage to float upon the Italian sea, and the Roman populace shall throng thereto chanting my praise. Its draperies shall be of purple, and on it I shall have a bed of eagles' plumage. There I shall sit, and at my side shall be the loveliest woman in the empire, while all the universe applauds the achievements of a god! And though the tempest roar around me, its rage shall be extinguished 'neath my feet, and sounds of music shall o'ercome the clamor of the waves!

What didst thou say? Vindex revolts, my legions fly, my women flee in terror? Silence and tears alone remain, and I hear naught but the rolling of thunder. Must I die, now?

DEATH.

Instantly!

NERO.

Must I give up my days of feasting and delight, my spectacles, my triumphs, my chariots and the applause of multitudes?

DEATH.

All! All!

SATAN.

Haste, Master of the World! One comes—One who will put thee to the sword. An emperor knows how to die!

NERO.

Die! I have scarce begun to live! Oh, what great deeds I should accomplish — deeds that should make Olympus tremble! I would fill up the bed of hoary ocean and speed across it in a triumphal car. I would still live — would see the sun once more, the Tiber, the Campagna, the Circus on the golden sands. Ah! let me live!

DEATH.

I will give thee a mantle for the tomb, and an eternal bed that shall be softer and more peaceful than the Imperial couch.

NERO.

Yet, I am loth to die.

DEATH.

Die, then!

[*He gathers up the shroud, lying beside him on the ground, and bears away Nero, wrapped in its folds.*]

Nero:- Yet, I am loth to die—
Death:- Die, then!

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UNIV. OF MICH.

RABELAIS

RABELAIS*

O NAME in literature has been more generally cited than that of Rabelais; and never, perhaps, has one been cited with so much ignorance and injustice. Thus, to some minds he is merely a drunken, cynical old monk, with a mind disordered and fantastic, as obscene as it is ingenious, dangerous in its ideas and revolting in their expression. To others he is a practical philosopher, gentle and moderate; sceptical, certainly, but, after all, an honest man of reputable life. He has been alternately loved and despised, misunderstood and rehabilitated; and ever since his prodigious genius first launched at the world his biting and all-embracing satire, in the form of the colossal mocking glee of giants, creatures of his imagination, each century has puzzled over his meaning, and has inter-

*The manuscript of this essay, unlike all other early manuscripts of Gustave Flaubert, bears no date. It belongs to the earliest of his writing, a time when there was a far from unanimous opinion among the literary *cognoscenti* regarding the work of Rabelais.

preted in a thousand fashions this long enigma, apparently so trivial, gross and merry, but in reality profound and true.

Rabelais' work is a historical achievement, in itself so important that it belongs to and illumines the thought of each age. Thus, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when first given to the world, it was in reality an open revolt, a moral pamphlet. It had the importance of actuality and the controlling power of a revolution. Rabelais may be regarded as a Luther in his own way. His sphere was that of laughter, but his power over men was such that with titanic mockery he demolished more of evil than the good man of Wittenberg, with all his anger. He managed everything so well — wielded so cleverly the sharp chisel of satire — that his laughter became a terror. His work is the embodiment of the grotesque; it is as eternal as the world.

Rabelais was the father of the frank and naïve literature of the seventeenth century — of Molière and La Fontaine, — all were immortals, geniuses, in spirit the most essentially French of Gallic writers. All three regarded poor human nature with a smile at once good-natured and cynical; all were frank, free and easy in their language, men in every sense of the word: careless of philosophers, of sects, of religions, they were of the religion of mankind itself, and well they understood it. They turned it over, analysed and dissected it; one in a strange story full of gross obscenities, bursting with laughter and blasphemy; the second, on the stage, in deftly constructed dialogue, full of truth and wisdom and a naïveté almost sublime — more of a philosopher in the simple laughter of his Mascarille, in the good sense of Phi-

linte, or in the bilious spleen of Alceste, than any other philosopher that ever lived; and the third, in fables for children with morals for men, in verses full of good-nature and kindly humour, in words and phrases, wherein rests something of sublimity; in crystalline sonnets, in all the poetic gems that deck his name with splendid ornaments.

But Rabelais is to-day a subject of serious study, the favourite author of those rare minds that rise superior to the ordinary limitations of intelligence. Besides those men whose names we cite, La Bruyère studied and appreciated his work with the utmost impartiality. The great romancer was not sufficiently correct to please the scrupulous taste of Boileau, or to accord with the reserve and purity of Racine. That prudish age, governed by Madame de Maintenon, so well typified in the flat and angular garden at Versailles, was ashamed of literature at once so frank and open, nude and picturesque. This giant made them fear. They seemed instinctively to feel that they were placed between two terrible epochs: the sixteenth century, which produced a Luther and a Rabelais, and the Revolution, which was to give a Mirabeau, a Robespierre. First the demolishers of faith, then the demolishers of life: two abysses', twixt which they stood firm in the adoration of themselves!

In the eighteenth century things were still worse. Philosophers then were of a high moral tone, and would have none of Rabelais. The poor curate of Meudon would have found himself much out of place in the salons of the witty and beautiful *marquises,* or in the intellectual society of Madame du Deffand or Madame Geoffrin. Never would they have comprehended the flashing darts of wit, the bubbling

spirits, the whirlwind, the poetic mind, throbbing with adventures, inventions, travel, and extravagances. The petty and affected tastes, the cold and formal manners of the age, were horrified at aught that might be called licentiousness of mind. The "Precieuses" probably preferred to have it in their manners! Voltaire, for instance, could pardon Rabelais because he ridiculed the Church; but of his style, of his meaning, Voltaire had scarce an idea, although he claimed to have a key to the great work, which he summed up in vicious epigram: "A mass of the grossest refuse ever vomited by a drunken monk."

It is quite natural that this should have been his opinion. The glory and value of Rabelais, as in the case of all great men, all illustrious names, have long been vigorously disputed. His genius is unique, exceptional; its product stands alone among the histories of the literatures of the world. Where is his rival to be found?

To go back to antiquity, shall we cite Petronius or Apuleius, with their studied and premeditated art, their classic style, their scholarly conceptions?

Passing to the Middle Ages, shall we compare the epics of the twelfth century, the comic and the morality plays? No, certainly not; and although much of the comic material in the work of Rabelais is characteristic of the grotesque humour and manners of the Middle Ages, we do not find its predecessor in any literary document.

Coming down to modern times, his closest imitator, Béroald of Verville, author of *L'Art de Parvenir,* is so far removed from his model in style and power that it is scarcely worth while to make a comparison. Sterne attempted to reproduce the style of Rabelais,

but his affectation and over-refined sensibility destroyed the parallel.

No, Rabelais is unique because he himself expresses the traits and characteristics of an entire century. His work possesses the highest significance in literature, politics, morals and religion. Certain geniuses appear from time to time, to create new literatures, or to resuscitate old ones; they deliver their message to the world, express the sentiment of their own generation, and we hear from them no more.

Homer sang the glories of the martial life, of the valiant and warlike youth of the world, the vernal season when the trees put forth new sprouts. In Virgil's day civilisation was already old; we find him full of tears, of shadows, sentiment and delicacy. Dante is sombre and radiant at the same time; he was the Christian poet, the bard of death and of hell, full of melancholy and of hope also. In olden times, if satiety overtook a people, if doubt entered into all hearts, if all beautiful dreams, all illusions, all Utopian yearnings fell, one by one, destroyed by stern realities, by science, reason, and analysis, what did the poet do? He retired within himself; he had sublime flights of pride and enthusiasm, and moments of poignant despair. He sang the agonies of the heart and the vagaries of fancy. Then, all the griefs that compassed him, the sobs that rang in his ears, the maledictions that he heard on every side, resounded in his soul—which God had made great, responsive, all-embracing—and issued thence through the voice of genius, to mark forever in history an epoch in a nation's life, to record its sorrows, and carve indelibly the names of its unfortunates. In our own day Lord

Byron has done this. For this reason, the true poet is more accurate than the historian, and indeed most poets are more strictly truthful than historians. Great writers, then, may be compared, in the realms of thought, to the capitals of kingdoms. They absorb the brains of every province and every individuality; mingling those qualities of each that are distinctively personal and original, they amalgamate them, arrange them, and after a time the result is seen in the form of art.

Rabelais was born in 1483, the year that Louis XI. died. Luther had just become known. The king had overthrown the ancient feudalism; the monks were about to attack the Papacy: this situation describes the history of the Middle Ages — a period divided between the wars of Nations and of the Church. But the people, weary of both, would have no more of either. They realised that the men of arms devoured their substance and ruined them; they knew the priests made use of them for their own selfish purposes, besides deceiving them. For some time the people contented themselves with inscribing satires and scurrilities on the stones of the cathedrals, with making songs against the seigneurs, or publishing, broadcast, biting criticisms of the ruling power or of the nobility, as in the *Romance of the Rose.* But something more was wanted: a revolt, a reform. Symbols were old, and so were mystery plays and poems; and there was a general feeling that an entirely new form of attack was desirable. Science was needed, even in poetry and philosophy.

In 1473, a caricature representing the Church, with the body of a woman, the legs of a chicken, the claws of a vulture, and the tail of a serpent, was cir-

culated throughout Europe. It was the epoch of Comines, of Machiavelli, of Arétin. The Papacy had lately had Alexander VI.; now it had Leo X., who was no better. An intellectual orgy had set in, destined to be long, and to end with blood. During the eighteenth century this was repeated, and the termination was the same.

In the chaotic conditions belonging to this epoch lived Rabelais. We are not surprised that, in the midst of this society, corrupt from its debaucheries and tottering on its foundations, and being witness to such ruin and devastation, the genius of this wonderful man prompted him to reveal, by means of withering sarcasm, the frightful past of the Middle Ages, the effects of which were still felt in his own century, which looked back upon that past with horror.

In my opinion, those who have claimed to possess a key to Rabelais, to be able to understand his allegories, and to translate each jest into its real significance, do not understand him in the least. His satire is general and universal, not at all personal or local. A careful reading of his work should prove the fallacy of such pretensions.

Shall I cite all that was done in this respect in the sixteenth century, and tell of all the abuse poured by that century upon the Middle Ages, of which it was the outcome? For instance, without saying anything of Ariosto, are not Falstaff, Sancho Panza, and Gargantua a grotesque trilogy forming a bitter satire on the old society?

Falstaff belongs wholly to England; he is John Bull bloated with beer and pork; fat, sensual, running away from the dead, eternally drawing from his

pocket a flask of old Spanish wine. He possesses none of the terrible grotesqueness of Iago, or of the deliberate immorality of Schiller's Hassan, the Moor. His greatest passion was self-love; he carried it to the highest degree; it was even sublime. He was egotism personified, with a certain facility in analysis and a strain of ridicule, by which he managed to turn everything to his own advantage.

As for peaceful Sancho Panza, mounted on his lazy, tawny ass, snoring all night and sleeping all day, a poltroon, not able to understand the meaning of heroism, full of proverbs, the prosaic man *par excellence,*— is not his base blood the crying reason why he endeavours with all his power to stop Don Quixote from tilting at the windmills, which the worthy knight takes for giants? The man of gentle birth attacks them, nevertheless, but he breaks his arm and wounds his head. His helmet is a barber's basin, his horse, Rosinante, and a labourer's donkey brays at the sight of his coat-of-arms.

Placed between these two figures, that of Gargantua is vaguer, less precise. His characterisation is ampler, freer, and grander. Gargantua is less gluttonous, less sensual than Falstaff, and not so lazy as Sancho Panza; but he is a greater drinker, a heartier laugher, and makes a louder clamour. He is terrible and monstrous in his gaiety.

One more reflection: the satire of Rabelais does not apply to his own day only. He denounces, for all time, all abuses, crimes, and everything that is ridiculous. Perhaps he was able to foresee a better state of the body politic and a society whose moral laws should be purified. Existing conditions aroused his pity, and, to employ a trivial expression, all the

world was a farce. And he made himself a part of the farce.

Since his time, what has been done? Everything has changed. Reform has come, with independence of thought. We have had the Revolution. We possess material independence. And what besides all this?

Thousands of questions have been discussed,—sciences, arts, philosophies, theories,—how many questions even during the last twenty years! What a whirlwind of thoughts and ideas! Where will they lead us?

Let us see. Where are we? Are we in the twilight or in full dawn? We have no more Christianity. What have we? I ask. Railways, factories, chemists, mathematicians. To be sure, our bodies are better off, we suffer less in the flesh, but the heart still bleeds! Do you not feel the perturbation of your soul, although its outward covering seems calm and happy? It is plunged in the abyss of universal scepticism; it is overcome by that deadly ennui that seizes upon our race even in the cradle. Meanwhile, politicians babble, poets have scarcely time to rhyme their fancies and scribble them hastily on ephemeral sheets of paper; and the suicidal bullet is heard in every garret and every palace where dwell misery, pride, or satiety!

Material questions have been settled. But others —have they also been solved? Answer me that! And the longer you delay in filling this yawning chasm in the soul of mankind, the more I mock at your efforts to be happy, and laugh at your miserable sciences, that are worth no more than a blade of grass.

Now is the time for another genius like Rabelais to arise. Let him be without anger, without hatred, without grief. What could he laugh at? Not at kings — there are no more; nor at God, because although we may have lost our faith, yet a certain fear remains; nor at the Jesuits, for they are an old story.

What could he laugh at, then? The material world has improved, or at least it is on the road to improvement.

But the other? He would have fine sport with that. And if such a poet could conceal his tears and laugh instead, I assure you his book would be the most terrible and the most sublime that ever has been written!

Preface to the Last Songs

(*POSTHUMOUS POEMS*)

OF

LOUIS BOUILHET.

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IT WOULD perhaps make criticism easier, if, before giving our opinion, we should make known our preferences. To omit this preliminary distinction is a great injustice, as every book contains a peculiarity pertaining to the writer himself, which, independently of the execution, will charm or irritate us according to our preferences. We are never completely charmed unless a book appeals to our feelings and our intellect at the same time.

First, let us discuss the object of the book. "Why this novel, this drama? Of what use is it? etc." Instead of following the author's idea, instead of pointing out to him where he failed of his aim, and how he should have gone about to attain it, we bicker with him on a thousand things outside of his subject, always declaring the contrary of what he meant to express. If a critic's sphere extends beyond the

author's province, he should first of all look to the æsthetics and the moral.

It is impossible for me to warrant either of these concerning the poet in questions. As for writing his life, it has been linked so closely with mine, that I shall be brief on this subject; individual memoirs belong only to great men. Besides, has not research been exhausted? History will soon absorb all literature. In studying too closely what makes up the author's atmosphere, we fail to give the originality of his genius due consideration. In La Harpe's time, when a masterpiece appeared, we were convinced,—thanks to certain rules!—that it was under no obligation whatsoever; whereas now, after we have examined everything about it, we still wish to discover its right to exist.

I have another scruple. I do not wish to betray the modesty that my friend constantly maintained. At an epoch when insignificant mediocrity aspired to fame, when typography was the medium of all affectations, and the rivalry of the most insipid personalities became a public pest, he was proud of being modest. His photograph was never displayed on the boulevards. No article, no letter, not a single line from him, was ever published in the papers. He did not even belong to the academy of his province. Yet no life is more deserving of praise than his. He lived nobly and labouriously. Though poor, he remained free. He was as strong as a blacksmith, mild as a child, intellectual without being paradoxical, noble without affectation; and those who knew him well will say that I have not praised him enough.

Louis Hyacinthe Bouilhet was born at Cany (Seine Inférieure), the 27th day of May, 1822. His

father, chief of ambulances in the campaign of 1812, swam the Bérésina, carrying on his head the regiment's chest, and died quite young from wounds received. His maternal grandfather, Pierre Hourcastremé, dabbled in legislation, poetry, and geometry, received congratulations from Voltaire, corresponded with Turgot and Condorcet, spent nearly all his money buying shells, produced *Les Aventures de Messire Anselme,* an *Essai sur la Faculté de Penser, Les Etrennes de Mnémosyne,* etc., and after being a lawyer in Pau, a journalist in Paris, administrator of the navy at Havre, and a schoolmaster at Montvilliers, died almost a centenarian, bequeathing to his grandson the memory of a strange but charming old man, who powdered his hair, wore knee-breeches and cultivated tulips.

The child was sent to Ingouville, to a boarding-school on a high cliff, and went to the college of Rouen at twelve, where he was usually at the head of his class. He was not a model pupil, however; this term applies to mediocre natures and a calmness of spirit which was rare in those days.

I do not know what students admire nowadays, but our dreams were wildly imaginative. The most enthusiastic dreamt of violent courtships, with gondolas, and fainting ladies carried away in stage-coaches by masked ruffians. Some, more gloomily disposed (admirers of Armand Carrel, a countryman), preferred the clash of the press and the court-room, or the glory of conspiracy. A rhetorician wrote an *Apologie de Robespierre,* which reached a certain gentleman and so scandalised him that it brought on an exchange of notes, followed by a challenge to a duel, in which the said gentleman did not play a very creditable part. One good-natured fellow always

wore a red cap; another swore to live as a Mohican; one of my intimate friends aspired to the honour of serving under Abd-el-Kader. Apart from being troubadours, insurgents and Orientals, we were, above all, artists. After studies, we wrote, and read novels till late in the night. Bar . . . , declaring he was tired of life, shot himself; and And . . . hanged himself with his cravat. We certainly deserved little praise for our follies; but we hated platitudes; our minds soared towards noble things. How we revered the masters! How we admired Victor Hugo!

Among this group was Bouilhet, the elegist, the poet of moonlight and ruins. When he was nearly twenty, this affectation disappeared, to give place to a virulent democracy, so genuine that he was about to join a secret society.

He received his bachelor's degree, and was told to choose a profession. He chose medicine, settled his small income on his mother, and taught for a living. His life became painfully labourious; he combined the duties of poet, tutor and saw-bones. Two years later, he was appointed interne at l'Hôtel Dieu in Rouen, under my father's orders. As he could not attend during the day, his turn came oftener than others for night watch. He did not mind it, however, as he had no other time in which to write. All his poems of love, flowers and birds were written in those winter nights, amidst the sick and suffering, or on Sundays in summer, while the patients walked under his window. Those years of sadness were not useless; the contemplation of suffering humanity, the dressing of wounds, the dissecting-table, gave him a better knowledge of mankind. Some would have given way under the strain, the disgust, the torture

of having to follow a vocation unsuited to him; but, thanks to his physical and mental health, he stood it cheerfully. Some still remember meeting in the streets of his native city, this handsome though somewhat timid youth, with flowing blond hair, who always carried a note-book, in which he wrote his verses as they came to him; sometimes while teaching, at a friend's house, in a café, during an operation, anywhere. Poor in worldly wealth, but rich in hope, he gave them away. He was a real poet in the classical sense of the word.

When we met again after four years' separation, he read to me three of his plays. The first, entitled *Le Deluge*, described a lover clinging to his beloved, while he watched with anguish the ruins of the fast disappearing world: "Hark to the crashing of the palm-trees on the heights, and to the agonizing cries of Earth!" It was somewhat prolix, and too emphatic, but was replete with force and passion. The second, a satire against the Jesuits, was more resolute and in an entirely different style: "Smile, priests of the boudoir and gather poor feminine souls in your golden nets!" "Charming ministers in the confessional, inflicting penance with love-words on their lips! Heroes of the Gospel, impleading the Lord with flowery language, and treading each day, holy martyrs! on soft carpets the *via crucis!*" "These merchants, at the foot of the cross, casting lots and dividing, piece by piece, O Lord, Thy robe and Thy cloak! These fakirs of holy relics, selling, oh, wonder! Thy heart as amulets, and phials of Thy blood."

We must not forget the disturbances of the times, and must remember that the author was only twenty-two. The play was dated 1844.

The third was an invective to "An author who sold his poems":

> Why seek a famished passion to revive?
> After thy rustic love through green fields strive
> On flowery banks beside the rosy stream
> Archangel, drink to drunkenness the sunny beam,
> Under the willows chant etotic dreams,
> Though Brutus' sins upon thy shoulders weigh
> Doubtless thy simple soul and heart inveigh
> Against the Destiny that took from thee.

"'Tis the greedy Plutus, with his purse full, who quotes smiling, human honesty!"

"Destiny is the bag full of gold into which we plunge our greedy hands with rapture! It is corruption which flaunts before our eyes its alluring breast! It is fear, the silent spectre that disturbs the coward in the hour of danger!"

"Your prudent Apollo, no doubt, passed through the stock exchange to reach the Parnassus? We often see, in the political sky, the morning sun die out before night. Look through your telescope, do you not see Guizot waning and Thiers coming to light? Do you base your changeable faith and your flexible probity on the mobility of the weather?"

"Avaunt! Greek, whose servile words lauded Xerxes the night before Thermopylæ!" He continued in the same rough tone against the administration. He sent his play to the *Reforme,* hoping they would print it; but they refused peremptorily, not wishing to expose themselves to a law suit—for mere literature.

It was near the end of 1845, when my father died, that Bouilhet gave up the practice of medicine. But he continued to teach, and, with the aid of a

partner, obtained bachelorships for their pupils. The events of 1848 disturbed his republican faith. He now became a confirmed *littérateur,* fond of metaphors and comparisons, but indifferent to all else.

His thorough knowledge of Latin (he wrote as fluently in Latin as in French) inspired the few Roman sketches, as in *Festons et Astragales* and the poem *Melœnis,* published in the *Revue de Paris,* on the eve of a political crisis. The moment was badly chosen. The public's fancy and courage were considerably cooled, and it was not disposed, neither were the powers, to accept independent genius; besides, individual style always seems insurrectionary to governments and immoral to commoners. The exaltation of vulgarism, the banishment of poetry, became more than ever the rage. Wishing to show good judgment, they rushed headlong into stupidity; anything above the ordinary bored them.

As a protest, he took refuge in forgotten places and in the far East; and thence came the *Fossiles* and different Chinese plays.

However, the provincial atmosphere stifled him; he needed a vaster field; and severing his connections, he came to Paris; but at a certain age one can no longer acquire the Parisian judgment; the things that seem simple to a native of the boulevards, are impracticable to a man of thirty-three arriving in the great city, having few acquaintances and no income, and unaccustomed to solitude. Then his bad days began.

His first book, *Madame de Montarcy,* received on approval at the Theatre Français, and refused at the second reading, lingered for two years and was only accepted at the Odéon in November, 1856. The first performance was a rousing success. The applause

often interrupted the action of the play; a whiff of youth permeated the atmosphere; it was a reminiscence of 1830. That night he became known; his success was assured. He could have collaborated, and made money with his name; but he preferred the quietness of Mantes, and went to live in a little house near an old tower, at the turn of the bridge, where his friends visited him on Sundays.

As soon as his plays were written, he took them to Paris; but the whims and fancies of the managers, the critics, the belated appointments, and the loss of time, caused him much weariness. He did not know that art, in a question of art, held such a trifling place! When he joined a committee against the unfair dealings at the Theatre Français, he was the only member that did not complain of the rates of authors' royalties.

With what pleasure he returned to his daily distraction, the study of Chinese! He pursued it ten years, merely as a study of the race, intending to write a grand poem on the Celestial Empire. Days when his heart was too full, he relieved himself by writing lyrical verses on the restrictions of the stage. His luck had turned, but with the *Conjuration d'Ambroise* it returned, and it lasted all winter.

Six months later he was appointed conservator of the municipal library of Rouen; and his old dream of leisure and fortune was realized at last! But soon afterward a dullness seized him — the exhaustion from too long a struggle. To counteract this he resumed the Greek tragic style and rapidly composed his last play, *Mademoiselle Aïssé,* which he never corrected. An incurable disease, long neglected, was the cause of his death, which took place on the 18th of July,

1869. He passed away without pain, in the presence of a friend of his youth and her child, whom he loved as if he were his own son. Their affection had increased towards the last, but two other persons marred their happiness. It seems that in a poet's family there are always bitter disappointments. Annoying quarrels, honeyed sarcasms, direct insults to art, the million and one things that make your heart bleed,—nothing was spared him while he lived, and these things followed him to his death-bed.

His fellow-countrymen flocked to his funeral as if he had been a public man; even the less educated knowing full well that a superior intellect had passed away. The whole Parisian press joined in this universal sorrow; even the most hostile expressed their regrets; a Catholic writer alone spoke disparagingly. No doubt the connoisseurs in verse deplore the loss of such a poetical spirit; but those in whom he confided, who knew his powerful spirit, who benefited by his advice, they alone know to what height he might have risen.

He left, besides *Aïssé,* three comedies in prose, a fairy-scene, and the first act of *Pélerinage de Saint-Jacques,* a drama in verse, in ten tableaux. He had outlined two short poems: *Le Bœuf,* depicting the rustic life of Latium; and *Le Dernier Banquet,* describing the Roman patricians poisoning themselves at a banquet the night the soldiers of Alaric are entering Rome. He wished also to write a novel on the heathen of the fifth century, the counterpart of the *Martyrs;* but above all, he desired to write his Chinese tale, the scenes of which are completely laid out. It was his supreme ambition to recapitulate modern science, to write the *De natura rerum* of our age!

Who has the right to classify the talents of his contemporaries, and, thinking himself superior to all, say: "This one comes first, that one second, and this other third"? Fame's sudden changes are numerous. There are irretrievable failures; some long, obscure periods, and some triumphant reappearances. Was not Ronsard forgotten before Sainte-Beuve? In days gone by, Saint-Amant was considered inferior as a poet to Jacques Delille. *Don Quixote, Gil Blas, Manon Lescaut, La Cousine Bette* and other masterpieces, have never had the success of *Uncle Tom.* In my youth, I heard comparisons made between Casimir Delavigne and Victor Hugo, and it seems that "our great national poet" was declining. Let us then be careful, or posterity will misjudge us—perhaps laugh at our bitterness—still more, perhaps, at our adulations; for the fame of an author does not spring from public approbation, but from the verdict of a few intellects, who, in the course of time, impose it upon the public.

Some will say that I have given my friend too high a place; but they know not, no more do I, what place he will retain. Because his first book is written in stanzas of six lines each, with triple rhymes, like *Naouma,* and begins like this: "Of all the men that ever walked through Rome, in Grecian buskins and linen toga, from Suburra to the Capitoline hill, the handsomest was Paulus," somewhat similar to this: "Of all the libertines in Paris, the first, oldest and most prolific in vice, where debauchery is so easily found, the lewdest of all was Jacques Rolla," without more ado, and ignoring the dissimilarity of execution, poetry, and nature, it was declared that the author of *Melœnis* imitated Alfred de Musset! He

was condemned on the spot; a farce—it is so easy to label a thing so as to be able to put it aside.

I do not wish to be unfair; but where has Musset, in any part of his works, harmonized description, dialogue, and intrigue in more than two thousand consecutive rhymes, with such results of composition, such choice of language, in short, where is there a work of such magnitude? What wonderful ability was needed to reproduce Roman society, without affectation, yet keeping within the narrow confines of a dramatic fable!

If you look for the primitive idea, the general element in Louis Bouilhet's poems, you will find a kind of naturalism that reminds you of the Renaissance. His hatred of commonplace saved him from platitudes; his inclination towards the heroic was tempered by his wit—he was very witty. This part of his talent was almost unknown; he kept it somewhat in the shadow, thinking it of no consequence; but now nothing hinders me from acknowledging that he excelled in epigrams, sonnets, rondeaux and other jests, written for distraction or pastime, and also through sheer good-nature. I discovered some official speeches for functionaries, New-Year verses for a little girl, some stanzas for a barber, for the christening of a bell, for the visit of a king. He dedicated to one of our friends, wounded in 1848, an ode on the patron of *The Taking of Namur,* where emphasis reached the pinnacle of dullness. To another who killed a viper with his whip he sent a piece entitled: *The struggle of a monster and a genius,* which contained enough imperfect metaphors and ridiculous periphrasis to serve as a model or as a scarecrow. But his best was a masterpiece, in Béranger's style, entitled *The Nightcap!*

His intimate friends will always remember it. It praised glory, the ladies, and philosophy so highly,—it was enough to make all the members of the Caveau burst with the desire of emulating him.

He had the gift of being entertaining—a rare thing for a poet. Compare his Chinese with his Roman plays, *Neera* with *Lied Norman, Pastel* with *Clair de Lune, Chronique de Printemps* with *Sombre Eglogue, Le Navire* with *Une Soirée,* and you will see how productive and ingenious he was.

He has dramatised all human passions; he has written about the mummies, the triumphs of the unknown, the sadness of the stones, has unearthed worlds, described barbaric peoples and biblical scenes, and written lullabies. The scope of his imagination is sufficiently proven in *Les Fossiles,* which Theophile Gautier called "the most difficult subject ever attempted by any poet!" I may add that it is the only scientific poem in all French literature that is really poetical. The stanzas at the end, on the future man, show how well he understood the most transcendent utopias. Among religious works, his *Colombe* will perhaps live as the declaration of faith of the nineteenth century. His individuality manifests itself plainly in *Dernière Nuit, A Une Femme, Quand vous m'avez quitté, Boudeuse,* etc., where he is by turns dismal and ironical; whereas in *La fleur rouge* it bursts out in a singularly sharp and almost savage manner.

He does not look for effect; follows no school but his own individual style, which is versatile, fluent, violent, full of imagination and always musical. He possesses all the secrets of poetry; that is the reason that his works abound with good lines, good all the way through, as in *Le Lutrin* and *Les Châtiments.*

Take, for instance: "Is long like a crocodile, with bird-like extremities." "A big, brown bear, wearing a golden helmet." "He was a muleteer from Capua." "The sky was as blue as a calm sea." "The thousand things one sees when mingling with a crowd."

And this one of the Virgin Mary: "Forever pale from carrying her God."

In one sense of the word, he is classical. His *l'Oncle Million* is written in the most excellent French. "A poem! Make rhymes! It is insanity! I have seen saner men put into a padded cell! Zounds! Who speaks in rhymes? What a farce! Am I imaginative? Do I make verses? Do you know, my boy, what I have had to endure to give you the extreme pleasure of watching, lyre in hand, which way the winds blow? Wisely considered, these frivolities are well enough at odd moments. I myself knew a clerk that wrote verses."

Then further: "I say Léon is not even a poet! He a poet, come! You are joking. Why, I saw him when he was no higher than that! What has he out of the ordinary? He is a rattle-brained, stupid fool, and I warrant you he will be a business man, or I will know the reason why!"

This style goes straight to the point. The meaning comes out so clearly that the words are forgotten; that is, while clinging to it, they do not impede or alter its purport.

But you will say these accomplishments are of no use for the stage; that he was not a successful playwright. The sixty-eight performances of *Montarcy*, ninety of *Hélène Peyron*, and five hundred of *La Conjuration d'Ambroise*, prove the contrary. One must really know what is suitable for the stage, and,

above all things, acknowledge that the dominant question is spontaneous and lucrative success. The most experienced are at sea, not being able to follow the vagaries of public taste. In olden times, one went to the theatre to hear beautiful thoughts put into beautiful language. In 1830, furious and roaring passion was the rage; later, such rapidity of action, that the heroes had not time to speak; then, thesis; after that, witty sallies; and now the reproduction of stupid vulgarism appears to monopolize the public favour.

Bouilhet cared nothing for thesis; he hated insipid phrases, and considered what is called "realism" a monstrosity. Stunning effects not being acquired by mild colouring, he preferred bold descriptions, violent situations—that is what made his poems really tragic. His plots weakened sometimes towards the middle, but, for a play in verse, were it more concise, it would crowd out all poetry. *La Conjuration d'Ambroise* and *Mademoiselle Aïssé* show some progress in this respect; but I am not blind; I censure his Louis XIV. in *Madame de Montarcy* as too unreal; in *l'Oncle Million* the feigned illness of the notary; in *Hélène Peyron* the too prolix scene in the fourth act, and in *Dolorès* the lack of harmony between vagueness and precision. In short, his personages are too poetical. He knew how to bring out sensational effects, however. For instance, the reappearance of Marcelline at Dubret's, the entrance of Dom Pedro in the third act of *Dolorès*, the Countess of Brissot in the dungeon, the commander in the last act of *Aïssé*, and the ghostly reappearance of Cassius before the Empress Faustine. This book was unjustly criticised; nor was the atticism understood in *l'Oncle*

Million, it being perhaps the best written of all his plays, as *Faustine* is the most labouriously contrived. They are all very pathetic at the end, filled with exquisite things and real passion. How well suited to the voice his poems are! How virile his words, which make one shiver! Their impulsion resembles the flap of a great bird's wings!

The heroic style of his dramas secured them an enthusiastic reception; but his triumphs did not turn his head, as he knew that the best part of a work is not always understood, and he might owe his success to the weaker. If he had written the same plays in prose, perhaps his dramatic talent would have been extolled; but, unfortunately, he used a medium that is generally disliked. "No comedy in verse!" was the first cry, and later, "No verses on the stage!" Why not confess that we desire none at all?

He never wrote prose; rhymes were his natural dialect. He thought in rhymes, and he loved them so that he read all sorts with equal attention. When we love a thing we love every part of it. Play-goers love the green-room; gourmands love to smell cooking; mothers love to bathe their children. Disillusion is a sign of weakness. Beware of the fastidious, for they are usually powerless!

Art, he thought, was a serious thing, its aim being to create a vague exaltation; that alone being its morality. From a memorandum I take the following notes:

"In poetry, one need not consider whether the morals are good, but whether they adapt themselves to the person described; thus will it describe with equal indifference good and bad actions, without suggesting the latter as an example."— PIERRE CORNEILLE.

"Art, in its creations, must strive to please only those who have the right to judge it; otherwise it will follow the wrong path."—GOETHE.

"All the intellectual beauties and details of a tale (if it is well written) are so many useful facts, and are perhaps more precious to the public mind than the main points that make up the subject."—BUFFON.

Therefore art, being its own motive, must not be considered an expedient. No matter how much genius we might use in the development of a story used as an example, another might prove the contrary. A climax is not a conclusion. We must not infer generalities from one particular case; those who think themselves progressive in doing so are working against modern science, which demands that we gather all the facts before proclaiming a law.

Bouilhet did not like that moralising art which teaches and corrects; he liked still less the frivolous art, which strives to divert the mind or stir the feelings; he did not follow democratic art, being convinced that, to be accessible to all, it must descend to the lowest level; as, at this civilised period, when we try to be artless we become silly. As to official art, he refused all its advantages, not wishing to defend causes that are so short-lived.

He avoided paradoxes, oddities, and all deviations; he followed a straight road; that is, the generous feelings, the immutable side of the human soul. As "thoughts are the foundation of language," he tried to think well so as to write well. Although he wrote emotional dramas, he never said: "If Margot wept, the melodrama is good," as he did not believe in replacing emotion by trickery. He hated the new maxim that says, "One must write as one speaks."

It is true, the old way of wasting time in making researches, the trouble taken when bringing out a book, would seem ridiculous nowadays; we are above all those things, we overflow with fluency and genius!

Not that he lacked genius, however; he often made corrections while a rehearsal was in progress. Inspiration, he held, cannot be made, but must come naturally. He followed Buffon's advice, expressing each thought by an image, and made his conceptions as vivid as possible; but the *bourgeois* declared that "atmosphere" was too material a thing to express sentiment; and fearing their sound French judgment might be disturbed and carried beyond its limits, they exclaimed "too much metaphor"!—as if they had any to spare!

Few authors take such pains in choosing their words, in phrasing. He did not give the title of author to those who possess only certain elements of style. Many of the most praised would have been unable to combine analysis, description, and dialogue!

He loved rhythm, in verse as well as in prose. He considered that language without rhythm was tedious, and unfit to stand the test of being read aloud. He was very liberal; Shakespeare and Boileau were equally admired by him; he read Rabelais continually, loved Corneille and La Fontaine, and, although very romantic, he praised Voltaire. In Greek literature, he preferred first of all the Odyssey, then Aristophanes; in Latin, Tacitus and Juvenal. He had also studied Apuleius a great deal.

He despised public speeches, whether addressed to God or to the people; the bigot's style, as that of the labourer; all things that reek of the sewer or of

cheap perfume. Many things were unknown to him; such as the fanaticism of the seventeenth century, the infatuation for Calvin, the continuous lamentations on the decline of the arts. He cared little for M. de Maistre, nor did Prudhon dazzle him. In his estimation, sober minds were nothing else than inferior minds; he hated affected good taste, thinking it more execrable than bad; and all discussions on the arts, the gossip of the critics. He would rather have died than write a preface. The following page, taken from a note-book and entitled *Notes et Projets*, will give a better idea: "This century is essentially pedagogic. There is no scribbler, no book, be they never so paltry, that does not press itself upon the public; as to form, it is outlawed. If you happen to write well, you are accused of lacking ideas. Heavens! One must be stupid indeed to want for ideas at the price they bring! By simply using these three words future, progress, society, no matter who you are, you are a poet. How easy to encourage the fools and console the envious! Mediocre, profitable poetry, school-room literature, æsthetic prattle, economical refuse, scrofulous products of an exhausted nation, oh! how I detest you all from the bottom of my heart! You are not gangrene, you are putrescence!"

The day after his death Théophile Gautier wrote: "He carried with pride the old tattered banner, which had seen so many battles; we can make a shroud of it, the valiant followers of Hernani are no more." How true! He devoted his entire life to ideals, loving literature for itself; as the last fanatic loves a religion nearly or quite extinct.

"Second-rate genius," you will say; but fourth-rate ones are not so plentiful now! We are getting

wide of the mark. We are so engrossed in stupidity and vulgarism that we shun delicacy and loftiness of mind; we think it a bore to show respect to great men. Perhaps we shall lose, with literary tradition, that ethereal element which represented life as more sublime than it really is; but if we wish our works to live after us, we must not sneer at fame. By cultivating the mind we acquire some wit. Witnessing beautiful actions makes us more noble.

If there should be somewhere two young men who spend their Sundays reading poetry together, telling each other what they have written and what they would like to write, and, while indifferent to all else, conceal this passion from all eyes—if so, my advice to them is this:

Go side by side, through the woods, reciting poetry; mingle your souls with the sap of the trees and the eternity of God's creations; abandon yourselves to reverie and the torpors of sublimity! Give up your youth to the Muse; it will replace all other loves. When you have experienced the world's miseries; when everything, including your own existence, seems to point towards one purpose; when you are ready for any sacrifice, any test,—then, publish your works. After that, no matter what happens, you will look on the wretchedness of your rivals without indignation, and on their success without envy. As the less favoured will be consoled by the other's success, the one with a stouter heart will encourage the weaker one; each will contribute his particular gift; this mutual help will avert pride and delay declination.

When one of you dies—as we must all die—let the other treasure his memory; let him use it as a

bulwark against weakness, or, better, as a private altar where he can open his heart and pour out his grief. Many times, in the stillness of night, will he look vainly for his friend's shadow, ready to question him: "Am I doing right? What must I do? Answer me!"—and if this memory be a constant reminder of his sorrow, it will at least be a companion in his solitude.

LETTER TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF ROUEN ON THE SUBJECT OF A MEMORIAL TO LOUIS BOUILHET.

Letter to the Municipality of Rouen

GENTLEMEN:—

BY A majority of two votes—thirteen votes against eleven (including that of the mayor and his six clerks)—you refused the offer I made you to erect *free of cost,* at any place you might choose in your city, a small fountain ornamented with the bust of Louis Bouilhet.

As I am spokesman for the persons who contributed their money for this purpose, I must protest in their name against this decision—that is, I must reply to the objections uttered in your meeting of the 8th of December last, an account of which appeared in the newspapers of Rouen on the 18th of the same month.

The four principal objections were:

1.—That the subscription committee changed the destination of the monument;

2.—That the municipal budget would be imperilled;

3.—That Bouilhet was not born in Rouen;

4.—That his literary talent is inadequate.

First objection (I use the words as they were printed): "Can the committee modify the intention

and substitute a fountain for a tombstone? Will all the subscribers accept the substitution?"

We have modified nothing, gentlemen! the monument (a vague expression, not precisely designating a tombstone) was suggested by M. Ernest Leroy, ex-prefect of the "Seine-Inférieure," on the day of Bouilhet's funeral.

I immediately started a subscription, on which figured the names of an imperial highness, George Sand, Alexandre Dumas, the great Russian author Tourgeneff, Harrisse, a New York journalist, etc. Some subscribers from the *Comedie Française* are: Mmes. Plessy, Favart, Brohan and M. Bressant; from the Opéra, M. Faure and Mlle. Nilsson; in short, after six months, we had about 14,000 francs at our disposal; besides this, the marble was to be given to us by the *Beaux-Arts* administration, and the sculptor chosen by us refused to accept any remuneration.

Surely, all those people, known or unknown, did not give their time, talent, or money, for the erection in a cemetery (which very few would ever visit) of so costly a tombstone; one of those grotesque constructions that are adverse to all religious feeling, to all philosophies, whose derisive pride insults eternity!

No, gentlemen, what they desired was something less useful—and more moral: that when passing Bouilhet's statue each one could say: "There was a man who, in this avaricious century, devoted his whole life to the worship of literature. This mark of respect is but justice to him, and I have contributed my share to this reparation." This was their idea; nothing else. Besides, how do you know? Who asked you to defend them?

The municipal council say: "As we understand it to be a tombstone, we will give ten metres of ground and subscribe 500 francs." As this decision implies a recrimination, let them keep their 500 francs! As to the ground, we are willing to buy it. What is your price? But enough on your first objection.

The second is dictated by excessive caution: "If the subscription committee have made a mistake in their estimate, the city could not leave it (the monument) unfinished; and we must even now foresee that, if need be, we should have to make up the deficit."

Our estimate was submitted to your architect; as to our funds, if they had been insufficient, rest assured the committee would have made an appeal to the subscribers, or rather, would have supplied them out of their own pockets. Thank heaven! we are rich enough to keep our word! Your excessive anxiety seems somewhat rude.

Third objection: "Bouilhet was not born in Rouen!" Yet, M. Decorde says in his report: "He is one of us"; and after the first performance of *La Conjuration d'Ambroise,* M. Verdrel, ex-Mayor of Rouen, at a banquet given in honor of Bouilhet, complimented him in the most flattering terms; calling him "one of the geniuses of Rouen." For some years, it was quite a fad of the smaller Parisian publications to ridicule the enthusiasm of the people of Rouen for Bouilhet. In the *Charivari,* a caricature represented the people of Rouen offering their respects to *Hélène Peyron* in the shape of bonbons and cakes; in another, I was represented dragging the "Rouenese float."

But no matter. According to you, gentlemen, if an illustrious man is born in a village consisting of

thirty shanties, the monument must be erected in that village, and not in the county seat? Then why not erect it in the street, house, or even room where he was born? Suppose his birthplace were unknown (history is not always decisive on this point),—what would you do? Nothing. Am I right?

Fourth objection:—"His literary merit!"

I find in the report many big words on this subject: "Propriety"; "principles." "It must be risky." "It would be a great distinction; an extreme honour; a supreme homage; which must be granted only with extreme caution"; lastly, "Rouen is too large a pedestal for his genius!" Really, such praise was not bestowed even upon the excellent M. Pottier, "whose services to the city library were more conspicuous" (no doubt, because it was your library). Nor, secondly, on Hyacinthe Langlois! I knew him, gentlemen, better than all of you. Do not revive this painful recollection! Never speak of this noble man! His life was a disgrace to his countrymen! You call him "a great Norman celebrity," and, dispensing fame in fantastic manner, you quote among the celebrities of which our city can boast (you can, but do not always) Pierre Corneille! Corneille a celebrity? Really, you are severe! Then, in the same breath, you mention Boieldieu, Lemonnier, Fontenelle, and, gentlemen, you forget Gericault, the dean of modern painting; Saint-Amant, the great poet; Boisgilbert, the first economist of France; De La Salle, who discovered the mouth of the Mississippi; Louis Poterat, inventor of porcelain in Europe,—and others!

That your predecessors should have forgotten to pay high, immoderate, sufficient tribute, or even no

tribute at all, to these "celebrities" (Samuel Bochart, for instance, whose name adorns one of the streets of Caen) is an indisputable fact! But does a previous injustice authorise subsequent wrongs?

It is true, nothing has been erected to the memory of Rabelais, Montaigne, Ronsard, Pascal, La Bruyère, Le Sage, Diderot, Vauvenargues, Lamennais, Alexandre Dumas, and Balzac, in their native cities. On the other hand, there is a statue of General de Saint-Pol at Nogent-le-Rotrou; one of General Blanmont at Gisors; one of General Leclerc at Pontoise; one of General Valhubert at Avranches; one of M. Vaisse at Lyons; one of M. Billault at Nantes; one of M. de Morny at Deauville; one of Ancelot at Havre; one of Ponsard at Valence; in a public park at Vire, an enormous bust of Chênedollé; at Séez, in front of the cathedral, a magnificent statue of Conté, etc.

This is all well enough, if the public purse has not suffered. Let those who desire fame pay for it; let those who wish to pay tributes to others, do so at their own cost. This is exactly what we wished to do.

So long as you were subject to no financial risks, your duty was to demand of us a guaranty of execution. Besides the right to choose the spot for our fountain, you had that of rejecting our sculptor and choosing one yourselves. But you are too engrossed in the hypothetical success of *Mademoiselle Aïssé!* "If this drama is not a success, might not the erection of a public monument to his literary talent [Bouilhet's] be looked upon with disfavour?"

M. Nion (who has special charge of the fine arts) thinks that if by chance this drama should be a failure, the adoption of the proposed plan would be

"rashness" on the part of the municipal council. So, it would seem that the bone of contention is the financial success of the piece! If it is a success, Bouilhet is a great man; if a failure, he is not! What a noble theory! The immediate success of a drama has nothing to do with its literary value. There are numerous examples: Moliere's *L'Avare* ran four nights; Racine's *Athalie* and Rossini's *Barbier de Seville* were hooted. But rest easy, *Mademoiselle Aïssé* was a great success. It does not seem to matter to M. Decorde, your reporter, who says: 'Bouilhet's talent is not proof against criticism'; and: 'His reputation is not sufficiently established.' M. Nion says: 'His method is more remarkable than his scenic conceptions! He is not original, not a first-class author!" M. Decorde calls him 'an imitator of Alfred de Musset, who was sometimes successful'! Really, my dear sir, you are not as indulgent as you should be towards a contemporary,—you who, artfully scoffing at this very city of Rouen, whose literary morals you defend so well, have stigmatized Saint-Tard as 'a progressive borough.'* A nice little place, where, "Despite the city toll, against which they grumble, liquor-shops and cafés flourish."

If you had been asked for money, I should have understood your reluctance.

"Here is another thing; we are continually taxed for the least reason." 'Tis true the bourgeois of Saint-Tard are not much given to generosity!

We expected better of you after your treatment of modern slang in your epistle *Des importations*

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* Read at a public meeting of the Academy of Rouen, Aug. 7th, 1867.

*Anglaises** in which are these lines: "I read in a paper that at Boulogne-sur-Mer a fashionable cricket-club had arranged a match. And having so poorly aped fashion, can lay claim to admiration." Attractive lines, but these are better: "I have read somewhere that a miser of Rennes, knowing no better way to avoid giving presents, had died on the New Year."

You are really versatile — whether you praise photograph collections: "It is a pleasant pastime, and everyone has a large collection," or Saint-Ouen Park: "Your fate is that of the great stream once so sought after, and you in your turn are deserted."† Or dancing: "As everything must follow the fashion, Terpsichore has submitted to the law of exchange. Ignoring prohibition, the Lancers have already reached us from Albion."‡ Or dinners in town: "You must not expect me to divulge what the menu consists of; but from the beginning the dessert adorns the table. Alas! those pleasures are not had for nothing; a winter in the city is more costly than one thinks!"§ Or the marvels of modern industry: "And now, thanks to special trains, we can visit Belgium or Switzerland in eight days, and at much less cost. And when De Lesseps has at last made a passage through the Suez Canal, the tourist can take a pleasure trip to India or

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* Read at the Academy of Rouen, at a public meeting, Aug. 7th, 1865. (See analytical summary of the works of the Academy of Rouen.)

† Letter of condolence to Saint-Ouen park.— Meeting of June 2, 1865. (See analytical summary of the Academy of Rouen.)

‡ Winter in the city. (Letter.— Meeting of Aug. 6th, 1863.)

§ Winter in the city. (Letter.— Meeting Aug. 6th, 1863.)

the extreme Orient as easily as travelling through France."*

Do not stop, by any means! Write dramas even, you who have such a keen conception of dramatic form! And rest assured, honourable sir, that if your "reputation were sufficiently established," and although like Louis Bouilhet's, your "talent" is not "proof against criticism," you are not "original" not "a first-class author," you will never be called "an imitator," even "sometimes successful," of Alfred de Musset!

Besides, your memory is at fault on this point. Did not one of your colleagues of the Academy of Rouen, at the meeting of Aug. 7th, 1862, praise Louis Bouilhet in flattering terms? He praised him so highly as a dramatic author, and denied so energetically that he was an imitator of Alfred de Musset, that when I wrote the preface to *Dernières Chansons,* I simply copied the words of my old friend, Alfred Nion, brother of M. Emile Nion, the gentleman that lacked boldness!

What was the gentleman "who has special charge of the fine arts" afraid of? Of obstructing your public by-ways? Poets like this one (begging your pardon) are not precisely innumerable. Since you have refused to accept his statue, *notwithstanding* our gift of a fountain, you have lost one of your colleagues, M. Thubeuf. I do not wish to speak unbecomingly, or to insult a sorrowful family I have not the honour of knowing, but it seems to me that Nicholas-Louis-Juste Thubeuf is at the present moment as forgotten as if he never had existed, while Bouilhet's name is known over all Europe. *Aïssé*

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* Vacations. (Familiar letter.— Meeting of Aug. 6th, 1861.)

is being played in St. Petersburg and London. His plays and verses will be printed in six, twenty, even a hundred years hence, and perhaps beyond that. A man is seldom remembered unless he has been amusing or serviceable. You are not able to be the former; grant us the latter. Instead of devoting your time to literary criticism, a pastime that is beyond your powers, attend to more serious things such as: the construction of a bridge; the construction of a bonded-warehouse; the widening of the Rue du Grand-Pont; the opening of a street, running from the Court-House to the docks; the much delayed completion of the spire of the cathedral, etc. Queer collection, indeed! It might be called "Museum of deferred projects."

You are so afraid of compromising yourselves, so afraid to act, that each outgoing administration hands its caution down to its successor. You think caution such a virtue that it would be a crime for you to act. Mediocrity is not detrimental, you think, but one must avoid being enterprising. When the public clamours, a committee is at once appointed; and from that time nothing is done. "We can do absolutely nothing; we await the committee's decision." Invincible argument to soothe public impatience!

Sometimes, however, you are bold enough to act; but it almost creates a scandal: as when the ex-Rue de l'Imperatrice, now the Rue Jeanne-Darc, and the Square Solferino were opened in Rouen. Still: "Public parks are the style now, and Rouen must have one!"*

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*M. Decorde's poetry. (Letter of condolence to Saint-Ouen Park, already cited.)

But the most important, though the most neglected, of all your projects is the distribution of water throughout the city. Take Saint-Sever, for example, where there is great need of it. What we proposed was, to erect, at any street corner, a small fountain adorned with a statue. Several of you had formally promised that our fountain should be erected; we were therefore greatly surprised at your decision, inasmuch as you are sometimes generous in these matters. The statue to Napoleon I. on the Place Saint-Ouen is an instance. You gave, for the erection of this masterpiece, which had cost 160,000 francs or thereabouts, the small sum of 30,000 francs! The council had appropriated the first time 10,000 francs; the second time, 8,000; and the third time, 5,000, as indemnity to the sculptor, because his *maquette* had casually been overthrown by the committee—always the committee! What aptitude for art! For the statue of Pierre Corneille, proposed in 1805 and erected twenty-nine years later, 1834, you spent 7,037.38 francs—not a cent more. True, he was a great poet, and you are so considerate that you prefer to deprive yourselves of a necessity, rather than honour a see-ond-rate poet!

Permit me to ask two questions: If this fountain, this useful public monument which we offered, had represented anything but Louis Bouilhet's bust, would you have refused it? If it had been intended for one of the capitalists of our district, whose fortune runs into the millions, would you have refused it? I doubt it.

Be careful, or you will be accused of despising those who cannot boast of a fortune! For such cautious men, who consider success the main object, you

have sadly erred, gentlemen! The *Moniteur Universel, l'Ordre,* the *Paris-Journal,* the *Bien Public,* the *XIXème Siecle, l'Opinion Nationale,* the *Constitutionnel,* the *Gaulois,* the *Figaro,* in fact, nearly all the papers, were against you. To convince you, we will simply quote a few lines from the dean of modern critics, Jules Janin:

"When the time came for definitive compensation, the last hope of Louis Bouilhet's friends was dashed to the ground; they encountered all sorts of obstacles. His statue was refused a place in a city that his fame had made illustrious! His friends proposed in vain to erect a much needed fountain, so that the statue ornamenting it might not be thought the main object of this good deed. But how can unjust men understand the cruelty of such a refusal? They might erect a statue to war, but to a poet, never!"

Of the twenty-four composing the committee, eleven sided with us; and Messrs. Vaucquier du Traversin, F. Deschamps and Raoul Duval spoke eloquently in our favour. This affair is trifling in itself, but it may be noted as a characteristic feature of the century—of your class.

"I address myself to you no longer, gentlemen, but to all the *bourgeoisie.* Therefore I say: Conservators who conserve nothing, it is time to follow a different path. You speak of decentralizing, regenerating,—if so, rouse yourselves. Be active! Originate! French nobles lost their prestige for having had, during two centuries, the feelings of menials. The end of the *bourgeois* is at hand, because their feelings are those of the rabble. I do not see that they read different papers, or hear different music, or that their pleasures

are more refined. In one as in the other, it is the same love of money; the same wish to destroy idols; the same hatred of superior minds; the same meanness; the same crass ignorance.

Of the seven hundred members of l'Assemblée Nationale, how many are there who could name six kings of France, who know the first rudiments of political economy, who have even read Bastiat? The whole municipality of Rouen, who disowned a poet's talent, no doubt are ignorant of the rules of versification. They do not need to know them, so long as they do not meddle with poetry.

To be respected by those beneath us, we must respect those above us! Before educating the rabble, educate yourselves! Enlightened people, enlighten yourselves! Because of your disdain for superiority, you think you have abundant good sense, you are positive, you are practical. One is never really practical unless he carries it a little farther. . . . You would not enjoy the benefits of industry if your ancestors of the eighteenth century had had other ideals than common usefulness. How we scoffed at Germany—at her dreamers, her ideologists, her ethereal poets! Our milliards compensated her for the time well employed in perfecting plans. It seems to me, it was the dreamer Fichte who reorganized the Prussian army after Jena; and that the poet Koërner sent a few Uhlans against us about 1813!

You practical? Come! You cannot even hold a pen or a gun! You let convicts rob, imprison, and slaughter you! You have lost even the brute's instinct of defence; and when not only your life, but your purse (which ought to be dearer to you), is in danger, you lack the energy to drop a ballot into a

box! With all your capital, all your wisdom, you never can form an association equal to *l'Internationale!* All your intellectual efforts consist of trembling for the future. Think! Hasten! or France, between a hideous demagogy and a stupid *bourgeoisie,* will sink lower and lower!

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT.

SELECTED

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

WITH AN

INTIMATE STUDY OF THE AUTHOR

BY

CAROLINE COMMANVILLE

ST. DUNSTAN SOCIETY
AKRON, OHIO

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INTIMATE REMEMBRANCES

OF

GUSTAVE FLAUBERT

I.

THESE pages are not a biography of Gustave Flaubert, they are simply recollections; my own and those I have collected.

My uncle's life was passed entirely in the intimacy of the family, between his mother and me; to relate the story of this life is to make him better known, more loved and esteemed; in this way I believe that I am fulfilling a pious duty towards his memory.

Before Gustave Flaubert's birth, my grandparents had had three children. The eldest, Achilles, was nine years older than Gustave, and the two other little ones were dead. Then came Gustave and another boy who died in a few months; and finally my mother, Caroline, the last child.

She and her younger brother loved each other with a peculiar tenderness. With but three years difference in their ages, the two little ones were scarcely ever separated from each other. Gustave

repeated everything he learned to his sister; she was his pupil, and one of his greatest pleasures was initiating her into literary composition. Later, when he was in Paris, it was to her he wrote; through her was the daily news transmitted to their parents, because that sweet communion had not been lost.

I should say that the greater part of the facts relative to my uncle's infancy have been told me by the old nurse who brought him up and who died three years after him, in 1883. The familiarity permitted with a child was followed in her case by a respect and worship for her master. She was "full of him," recalling his least action, his least word. When she said "Monsieur Gustave," she believed that she was speaking of an extraordinary being. Those who knew him will appreciate the verity contained in the admiration of this old servant.

Gustave Flaubert was four years old when Julie came to Rouen into my grand-parents' service, in 1825. She came from the village of Fleury-on-the-Andelle, situated in that pretty, smiling valley which extends from Pont-Saint-Pierre to the great market-town of Lyons-la-Forêt. The coast of the "Two Lovers" protected its entrance; here and there was a château, sometimes surrounded by water and having its drawbridge, again the superb estate of Radepont, the ruins of an old abbey and the woods of the surrounding hills.

This charming country is fertile in old stories of love and of ghosts. Julie knew them all. She was a skilful story-teller, this simple girl of the people, and endowed with a naturally fine and agreeable mind. Her ancestors, from father to son, had been postilions, rather bad fellows, and hard drinkers.

While Gustave was small he would sit beside her for whole days. In order to amuse him, Julie would join together all the legends she had heard around the fire with those she had read, and, having been kept in bed a year with a bad knee, she had read more than most women of her class.

The child was of a tranquil nature, meditative, possessing an ingenuousness of which he retained traces during his whole life. My grandmother has told me that he would remain for hours with a finger in his mouth, absorbed, and with an almost stupid appearance. When he was six years old an old domestic, called Pierre, used to amuse himself with that innocence; he would say to little Gustave, if he teased for anything, "Go now and look at the end of the garden, or in the kitchen and see whether I am there." And the child would go and say to the cook: "Pierre sent me to see whether he were here." He could not comprehend that they were deceiving him, and while they laughed, would stand thinking, trying to see through the mystery.

My grandmother had taught her oldest son to read, and, wishing to do as much for the second, put herself to the task. The little Caroline, beside Gustave, learned by degrees that she could not keep up with him, and he, being forced to understand this from signs of which no one said anything to him, began to weep large tears. He was, however, eager for knowledge, and his brain worked continually.

Opposite the hospital, in a modest little house in the Rue de Lecat, lived two old people, Father and Mother Mignot. They had an extreme tenderness for their little neighbour. Times without number, the child would open the heavy door of the Hôtel-Dieu,

and run across to Father Mignot's knee, upon a signal from him. And it was not the good woman's strawberries that tempted him, but the stories the old man told him. He knew a great many pretty tales of one kind and another, and with what patience he related them! From this time Julie was supplanted. The child was not difficult to please, but had insistent preferences; those that he liked must be told him over and over again.

Father Mignot also read to him. *Don Quixote* especially pleased my uncle; he would never let it be taken from him. And he retained for Cervantes the same admiration all his life.

In the scenes brought about by the difficulty of learning to read, the last irrefutable argument with him was: "Why should I learn, since Papa Mignot can read to me?"

But the age for entering school arrived. He must know once for all that his old friend could not follow him there. Gustave put himself resolutely to work, and at the end of a few months had caught up with the children of his age. He entered the eighth class.

He was not what one would call a brilliant pupil. Continually failing to observe some rule, and not troubling himself to understand his professors, punishments abounded, and the first prize escaped him, except in history, in which he was always first. In philosophy he distinguished himself, but he never comprehended mathematics.

Generous and full of exuberance, he had some warm friends whom he amused extremely by his unquenchable enthusiasm and good humour. His melancholy times, for he had them even then, he passed

in a region of his mind accessible to himself alone, and not yet did he show them in his exterior life. He had a great memory, forgetting nothing, neither benevolences nor vexation of which he was the subject. Thus, he preserved for his professor in history, Cheruel, a profound remembrance, and hated a certain usher who had hindered him from reading his favourite book during the study hour.

But his years at the college were miserable; he never could become accustomed to things there, having a horror of discipline, and of everything that savoured of militarism. The custom of announcing the change of exercises by the beating of drums irritated him, and that of filing the pupils in rank when they passed from one class to another exasperated him. Constraint in his movements was a punishment, and his walk with the procession every Thursday was never a pleasure; not that he was feeble, but he had a natural antipathy for all that seemed to him useless motion. His antipathy for walking lasted his whole life. Of all exercises for the body, swimming alone pleased him; he was a very good swimmer.

The dull, labourious days of school life were enlivened by outings on Thursdays and Sundays. Then he saw his beloved family and his little sister, which was a joy unequalled.

In the dormitory during the week, thanks to some hidden pieces of candle, he read some of Victor Hugo's dramas, and his passion for the theatre was kept warm. From the age of ten, Gustave composed tragedies. These pieces, of which he was scarcely able to write the lines, were played by him and his comrades. A great billiard hall opening from the salon was given up to them. The billiard table,

pushed to one end of the room, served as a stage, which they mounted by means of a crock from the garden. Caroline had charge of the decorations and costumes. His mother's wardrobe was plundered for old shawls, which made excellent peplums. He wrote to one of his principal actors, Ernest Chevalier: "Victory! victory! victory! victory! You will come, and Amédée, Edmond, Madame Chevalier, Mamma, two servants and perhaps some pupils, will be here to see us play. We shall give four pieces that you do not know. But you will soon learn them. The tickets of the first, second, and third classes are made. There will be some armchairs. There will also be scenery and decorations; the curtain is arranged. Perhaps there will be ten or twelve persons. So we must have courage and not fear," etc.

Alfred Le Poittevin, some years older than Gustave, and his sister Laura, were also a part of these representations. The family of Poittevin was bound to that of Flaubert through the two mothers, who had known each other from nine years of age at the *pension*. Alfred Le Poittevin had a very great influence upon my uncle in his youth, contributing to his literary development. He was endowed with a brilliant mind, full of life and eccentricity. He died young, which was a great grief. My uncle speaks of him in his preface to the *Last Songs*.

A few words about my grandparents and upon the moral and intellectual development of my uncle.

My grandfather, whose traits have been sketched in *Madame Bovary*, under those of Doctor Larivière, called in consultation to the bed of the dying Emma, was the son of a veterinary of Nogent-on-the-Seine.

The situation of the family was modest: nevertheless, by denying themselves, they sent their son to Paris to study medicine. He took the first prize in the great competition and by this success was received as a doctor free of further cost. Scarcely had he passed his examinations when he was sent from Dupuytren, where he was house physician, to Rouen to Doctor Laumonier, who was then surgeon of the hospital. This sojourn was supposed to be only temporary, to restore his health, which had become enfeebled from overwork and a life of privation. But, instead of remaining for a few months, the young physician spent all his life there. The frequent appeals of his numerous friends, or the hope of arriving at a high place in the medical profession in Paris, which his successful beginning had justified, never decided him to leave his hospital and a people to whom he became profoundly attached.

But in the beginning, it was love which extended this sojourn,—love for a young girl, a child of thirteen years, a goddaughter of Madame Laumonier, an orphan in a boarding-school, who came each week to visit her godmother.

Anne-Justine-Caroline Fleuriot was born in 1794 at Pont-l'Evêque in Calvados. Through her mother she was allied to the oldest families in Lower Normandy. "A great noise is made," said Charlotte Corday in one of her letters, "about an unequal marriage between Charlotte Cambremer de Croixmare and Jean-Baptiste Francois-Prosper Fleuriot, a doctor without reputation." At thirty years of age Mademoiselle de Croixmare had been sent back to the convent. But the obstacles were finally conquered, the walls of the convent broken and the marriage took

place. One year later a daughter was born, and the mother died in giving her birth.

The child, left in the arms of its father, became for him an object of tenderness and worship. At sixteen, my grandmother still remembered with emotion her father's kisses. "He would undress me each evening," she said, "and put me in my bed, wishing to take my mother's place." These paternal cares soon ceased. Doctor Fleuriot, seeing that he was about to die, gave his daughter in charge of two old ladies of Saint-Cyr who had a little school at Honfleur. These ladies promised to keep her until her marriage, but they, too, soon disappeared. Then her tutor, Monsieur Thouret, sent the young girl to Madame Laumonier, sister of Jacques-Guillaume Thouret, Deputy from Rouen to the States-General and President of that Assembly. She came at the same time as my grandfather, when they happened to see each other. Some months later they avowed their love and promised themselves to each another.

The Laumonier household, like many others of that epoch, tolerated, under a spiritual and gracious exterior, a certain lightness of morals. The eminently serious nature of my grandmother and her love preserved her from the dangers of such surroundings. Besides, my grandfather, more far-seeing than she could be, wished her to remain in the boarding-school until she was married. She was eighteen and he twenty-seven at the time of their marriage. Their purse was slender, but their hearts had little fear. My grandfather's portion was in his future; my grandmother had a little farm which brought her a revenue of four thousand francs.

The household was established in the Rue du

Petit-Salut, near the Rue Grand-Pont, a little street of narrow houses, touching one another, where the sun could never penetrate. In my childhood my grandmother would often take me through there, and, looking at the windows, would say in a grave voice, almost religious: "Look, my child, the best years of my life were passed there."

Descended from a Champenois and a Norman, Gustave Flaubert had the characteristic signs of both races; his temperament was very expansive and, at the same time, it was enveloped in the vague melancholy of the people of the north. He was of even temper and gay, sometimes with a touch of buffoonery; but ever at the bottom of his nature was an undefined sadness, a kind of disquiet. He was physically robust, enjoying full, strong pleasures; but his soul, aspiring to an unattainable ideal, suffered without ceasing in not finding it. This applied to the smallest things; because, as a seeker after the exquisite, he had found that the most frequently recurring sentiment was nearly always one of grief. This without doubt added to the sensibility of his nervous system, which the violent commotions of a certain malady (to the paroxysms of which he had had many relapses, especially in his youth) had refined to an extreme point. That came also from his great love of the ideal. This nervous malady threw a veil over his whole life; it was a permanent fear obscuring even his happiest days. However, it had no influence upon his robust health, and the incessant and vigorous work of his brain continued without interruption.

Gustave Flaubert was something of a fanatic; he had taken art for his god, and like a devotee, he knew all the tortures and all the intoxications of the

love to which he had sacrificed himself. After hours passed in communion with abstract form, the mystic became man again, was a *bon vivant,* laughed with a frank laugh, put a charming gaiety into the recital of a story, or some pleasant personal remembrance. One of his greatest pleasures was to amuse those about him. What would he not do to raise my spirits when I was sad or ill?

It was easy to feel the honesty of his characteristics. From his father he had received his tendency to experiment, that minute observation of things which caused him to spend infinite time in accounting to himself for the smallest detail, and that taste for all knowledge which made him a scholar as well as an artist. His mother transmitted to him his impressionability and that almost feminine tenderness which often made his great heart overflow and his eyes grow moist at the sight of a child. His taste for travel, he often said, came to him from one of his ancestors who took part in the conquest of Canada. He was very proud of counting up the brave ones among his own people, any one who had brains and was not *bourgeois;* for he had a hatred of the *bourgeois,* and continually employed that term as a synonym for mediocrity and envy, the living only with the appearance of virtue and insulting all grandeur and beauty.

At the death of Laumonier, my grandfather succeeded him as surgeon-in-chief of the Hospital. It was in this vast building that Gustave Flaubert was born.

The Hospital at Rouen, of the construction of the last century, is not wanting in a certain kind of character; the straight lines of its architecture

present something of chasteness and something of the accepted modern types. It was situated at the end of Rue de Crosne, and as one came from the centre of the town he found himself face to face with the great arch of the iron gate, all black, behind which was a court-yard with willows planted in rows: at the end and built around the sides was the edifice.

The part occupied by my grandparents formed a wing, approached by a private entrance. At the left of the central gate, a high door opened upon a court where grass grew among the old paving stones. On the other side of the pavilion was a garden forming an angle with the street, bordered at the left by a wall covered with ivy and hemmed in at the right by the hospital buildings. These are high grey walls, punctured with little glazed holes to which meagre faces are glued, their heads bound in white linen cloths. These ghastly silhouettes with hollow eyes show great suffering and have a profound sadness about them.

Gustave's room was on the side of the entrance, in the second story. The view was upon the hospital gardens overlooking the trees, under whose verdure the patients sat on stone seats, when the weather was pleasant. From time to time the white wing of a great bonnet of one of the sisters could be seen rapidly crossing the courtyard, and sometimes there were visitors, the parents of the invalids, or the friends of the attendants, but never any noise or anything unexpected.

This severe and melancholy place could not have been without influence upon Gustave Flaubert. He ever retained an exquisite compassion for all human

suffering, and also a high morality, which would scarcely be suspected by those who are scandalised by his paradoxes.

No one was less like what is usually called an artist than my uncle. Among the peculiarities of his character, the contrasts have always astonished me. This man, so preoccupied with beauty in style and giving form so high a place, even the highest, paid little attention to the beauty that surrounded him; his own furniture was of heavy contour, not the least delicate, and he had no taste for objects of art (bric-à-brac) so much in vogue at that time.

He loved order with a passion, carrying it to a mania, and would never work until his books were arranged in a certain fashion. He preserved carefully all letters addressed to him. I have large boxes full of them. Did he think there would be as much interest taken in them as there was later in his own? Did he foresee that great interest in his correspondence (which reveals the man in a light so different from that revealed by his works), that he imposed upon me the task of collecting and publishing it? No one can say.

He always observed extreme regularity in his work each day. He yoked himself to it as an ox is yoked to a cart, without waiting for that inspiration which expectation renders fruitless, as he said. His energy of will for all that concerned his art was prodigious, and his patience was tireless. Some years before his death, he would amuse himself by saying: "I am the last of the Fathers of the Church," and, in fact, with his long, maroon-coloured wrapper and a little black silk cap on the top of his head, he was something like a recluse of Port-Royal.

I can see him now running over the terrace at Croisset, absorbed in thought, stopping suddenly, his arms crossed, raising his head and remaining for some moments with his eyes fixed on the space above, and then resuming his walk again.

Life at the Hospital was regular, free, and good. My grandfather, who had attained a high reputation, medically, gave his children all that ease and tenderness could add to the happiness of youth. He had bought a house in the country, at Deville near Rouen, which he disposed of one year before his death, a railroad having cut through the garden only a few metres from the house. It was then that he bought Croisset, on the banks of the Seine.

Each year the entire family went to Nogent-on-the Seine to the home of the Flaubert parents. It was quite a journey, which we made in a post-chaise, a veritable journey of the good old times. The thought of them brought many an amusing remembrance to my uncle; but those which were most charming to him were his vacations passed at Trouville, then but a simple fishing village.

He met there some English people, the family of Admiral Collier, all of whom were beautiful and intelligent. The oldest daughters, Gertrude and Henrietta, soon became the intimate friends of my uncle and my mother. Gertrude, now Madame Tennant, lately wrote me some pages about her youth. I translate the following lines:—

"Gustave Flaubert was then like a young Greek. In full adolescence, he was tall and thin, supple and graceful as an athlete, unconscious of the gifts that he possessed, physically and morally, caring little for the impression he produced and entirely indifferent to accepted form. His dress consisted of a red flannel shirt, great trousers of blue

cloth, a scarf of the same color around his waist and a cap put on no matter how, or often bare-headed. When I spoke to him of fame, or of influence, as desirable things that I esteemed, he listened, smiled, and seemed superbly indifferent. He admired what was beautiful in nature, art and literature and lived for that, as he said, without any thought of the personal. He cared neither for glory nor for gain. Was it not enough that a thing was true and beautiful? His great joy was in finding something that he judged worthy of admiration. The charm of his society was in his enthusiasm for all that was noble; and the charm of his mind was its intense individuality. He hated all hypocrisy. What was lacking in his nature, was an interest in exterior and useful things. If any one happened to say that religion, politics, or business had as great an interest for them as literature or art, he would open his eyes in astonishment and pity. To be literary, an artist, that alone was worth living for."

It was at Trouville also that he met the musical editor, Maurice Schlesinger and his wife. Many faces remained engraved on his memory of his sojourns by the sea, among others that of an old sailor, Captain Barbet and his little daughter, Barbette, a little humpback always crying out to her dolls. Then there was Doctor Billard, and Father Couillère, mayor of the commune, at whose house they had repasts that lasted for six hours. He recalled these years in writing *A Simple Soul*. Madame Aubin, her two children, the house where she lived, and all the details so true, so appreciative, in this simple history, are of striking exactness. Madame was an aunt to my grandmother; Félicité and her parrot once lived.

In his last years, my uncle had an extreme desire to revive his youth. He wrote *A Simple Soul*, after his mother's death, to try to accomplish this. In painting the town where she was born, the hearth before which she had played, his cousins, the companions of his childhood, he found satisfaction, and

that pleasure has brought from his pen his most touching pages, those perhaps where he allows us to divine most clearly the man under the writer. Recall that scene where Madame Aubin and her servant are arranging the trifling possessions that had belonged to Virginia. A large hat of black straw which my grandmother had worn awoke in my uncle a similar emotion. He would take that relic from the nail, look at it in silence, with eyes moistening, and then respectfully replace it.

Finally, the happy time of leaving college arrived, but the terrible question of choosing a profession, or taking up some career poisoned his joy. As a vocation, he cared only for literature, and "literature" is not a career; it leads to no "position." My grandfather wished his son to be a savant and a law practitioner. To devote himself to the unique and exclusive research for beauty of literary form, seemed to him almost folly. A man of character, eminently strong, and of very active habits, he comprehended with difficulty the nervous and somewhat feminine side which characterises all artistic organisations. With his mother my uncle found more encouragement, but she held to the point that he should obey his father, and he was resolved that Gustave should make his way in Paris. He set out, sad at leaving his own people, his sister especially.

At Paris he lived in the Rue de l'Est in a little bachelor apartment where he found himself badly installed. The noisy, free and easy pleasures of his comrades seemed to him stupid, so that he scarcely ever participated in them. He would remain alone, open one of his law books, which he would immediately put away, then extending himself upon his

bed, he would smoke and dream for hours. He became very weary of this life, and grew sombre.

Pradier's studio alone put warmth in him again; he saw there all the artists of the day, and in contact with them he felt his instincts grow. One day he met Victor Hugo there. Some women visited the studio; it was there he met Louise Colet. He often went to see the pretty English girls of Trouville, to the salon of the editor, Maurice Schlesinger, and to the hospitable house of his father's friend, Doctor Jules Cloquet, who led him away one summer to the Pyrenees and to Corsica. The *Education Sentimental* was composed in remembrance of this epoch.

But in spite of friendship,—doubtless in spite of love,—a weariness without bounds invaded him. His work, which was contrary to his taste, became intolerable to him, his health was seriously affected and he returned to Rouen.

My mother's marriage, her death the year following, and a little later that of my grandfather, left my grandmother in such grief that she was happy to keep her son near her. Paris and the Law School were abandoned. It was then that, in company with Maxime Ducamp, he made the journey through Brittany and they wrote together the book: *Over Strand and Field.* (*A travers les Champs et les Grèves.*)

Upon his return, he began his *Saint Antoine,* his first great work. It had been preceded by many, of which fragments have been published since his death. The *Saint Antoine* composed then, was not the first known to the public. This work was undertaken at three different times before it was finally finished.

In 1849 Gustave Flaubert took a second journey with Maxime Ducamp. This time the two friends directed their steps towards the Orient, which had for so long been their dream!

II.

My personal reminiscences date from his return. He came back at evening; I was in bed, but they awakened me. He came to my little bed, raised me suddenly and found me very droll in my long night-gown; I remember that it extended far below my feet. He began to laugh very hard and then to imprint great kisses on my cheeks which made me cry; I felt the cold of his moustache, humid with dew, and was very glad when he put me down again. I was then five years old and we were at the grandparents' house at Nogent. Three months later I saw him again in England, as I still remember distinctly. It was at the time of the first Exposition at London. They took me there and the crowd frightened me; my uncle took me on his shoulder, and I traversed the galleries overlooking everybody, this time happy to be in his arms. They chose me a governess and we returned to Croisset.

My uncle wished to begin my education immediately. The governess was to teach me only English; my grandmother would teach me to read and write, and for him was reserved history and geography. He believed it useless to study grammar, holding that it taught itself in reading, and that it was bad to charge the memory of a young child with abstrac-

tions, which one begins where often they ought to finish.

Then began some years when we were all together.

Croisset, where we lived, is the first village on the bank of the Seine in going from Rouen to Havre. The house, long and low in shape, all white, must have been built about two hundred years. It had belonged to the monks of the Abbey of Saint-Ouen whom it served for a country house, and it pleased my uncle to think that Prévost had composed *Manon Lescaut* here.

In the interior court, where still remained the pointed roof and the guillotine-shaped windows of the seventeenth century, the construction was interesting, but the façade was ugly. It had undergone one of those remodellings in bad taste that were seen so often in the first Empire and the reign of Louis Philippe, at the beginning of the century. Above the entrance, after the fashion of bas-reliefs, were some villainous casts,—the seasons of Bouchardon—and the mantelpiece in the salon had on each side a representation of a mummy in white marble, a souvenir of the Egyptian country.

The rooms were few, but sufficiently large. The spacious dining-room, which occupied the centre of the house on the ground floor, opened upon the garden by a glass door flanked by two windows in full view of the river. It was pleasing and gay.

On the next story, at the right, a long corridor separated the chambers, and on the left was my uncle's study, or work-room. It was a large apartment, with a very low ceiling, but very light, because of five windows, of which three looked upon

the whole length of the garden, the other two being in the front of the house. There was a pretty view of the turf, the beds full of flowers, the trees on the long terrace, and the Seine enframed in the foliage of a splendid tulip tree.

The ways of the house were subordinated to the taste of my uncle, my grandmother having, so to speak, no longer any personal life; she lived for the happiness of others. Her tenderness was in alarm at the slightest symptom of suffering which she thought she detected in her son, and she sought to envelop him in a calm atmosphere. In the morning she was on the defence against the least noise; towards ten o'clock the violent ringing of a bell would be heard, and some one would go to my uncle's room; not until then did every one awake. The domestic carried him his letters and newspapers, deposited on the night table a glass of fresh water and a well-filled pipe; then he opened the shutters, and the light streamed in. My uncle would seize his letters, run over the addresses, but rarely did he open one before taking a few whiffs from his pipe; then, having read them all, he would tap the neighbouring wall to call his mother, who would run in immediately and seat herself near his bed until he was ready to rise.

He made his toilet slowly, sometimes interrupting himself to go to the table and re-read some passage with which he was preoccupied. Although little complicated, his dress was not lacking in care, and his neatness expressed his refinement.

At eleven he came down to breakfast, where my grandmother, uncle Parain, the governess and I, were already assembled. We all loved uncle Parain infinitely. He had married my grandfather's sister and

passed a great part of the year with us. At this time my uncle ate little, especially in the morning, finding that too much nourishment made him heavy and unfit for work. Almost never did he eat meat; only eggs, vegetables, a piece of cheese, fruit and a cup of cold chocolate. At dessert, he would relight his pipe—a little clay pipe—get up and go into the garden, where we followed. His favourite walk was the terrace walled in and bordered on one side by old willows cut stralght across like a gigantic wall. This led to a little pavilion in the style of Louis XV., whose windows looked out upon the Seine. Very often on summer evenings we would all seat ourselves here under the balcony of graceful fretwork and remain for some calm hours, chatting together; the night would come, little by little, the last passers disappear; in the water opposite we could just distinguish the silhouette of a horse drawing a boat which glided along without noise; then the moon would begin to shine with a thousand sparkling rays, like a fine diamond powder, scintillating at our feet, while a light tug and two or three barques would slip from their moorings and invade the river. These belonged to the eel fishers who were starting at this time to set their nets.

My grandmother, who was very delicate, would cough, and my uncle would say: "It is time to return to the Bovary." The Bovary? What was that? I knew not. But I respected the name, those two words, as I respected everything that came from my uncle, and believed vaguely that it was a synonym for work, and work was writing, as was well understood. In fact, it was during these years, from 1852 to 1856 that he composed this novel.

We were rarely in the pavilion after breakfast. Fleeing from the midday sun, we mounted to a spot called "The Mercury," because of a statue of that god which formerly ornamented it. It was a second avenue situated above the terrace, which led to a charming shady footpath; some old yew-trees came out of the rocks in queer shapes, showing their bare roots and jagged trunks; they appeared to be suspended, holding only to the crumbling wall at the side by their roots. Above the alley was a kind of round-point, a circular bench concealed under some huge chestnut-trees. Through the branches one could see the tranquil waters and above them a large expanse of sky.

From time to time, a cloud would rapidly go by and vanish. It was the smoke of a steamboat; and immediately would appear between the interlaced branches the pointed masts of ships which were being towed to Rouen. Sometimes there would be seven, or nine. Nothing is more majestic and beautiful than the pomp of these floating houses, which suggest a far-off country. About one o'clock could be heard a sharp whistle; it was "the steamer," as they say in the country. Three times a day this boat crossed between Rouen and Bouille. The whistle was the signal of departure.

"Come," my uncle would say, "come to your lesson, my Caro;" and dragging me along, we would both go into his large study, where the shutters were carefully closed to keep out the heat. It was pleasant there; one breathed an odour of Oriental joss-sticks mingled with that of tobacco, also with perfumes that were wafted in through the door of his dressing-room. With a bound I would throw

myself upon the great white bear-skin, which I adored, and cover his great head with kisses. My uncle, meantime, would be putting his pipe on the chimney-piece; and, selecting another, would fill it, light it, and seat himself in his leather armchair at the end of the room; he would cross one leg over the other, turn his back, take a file and begin to polish his nails, saying: "Let us see, where were you? Now, what do you remember from yesterday?"

"Oh! I know the history of Pelopidas and Epaminondas very well."

"Relate it, then."

I began, but naturally I became confused or I had forgotten.

"I am going to tell it to you once more," he would finally say.

Then I would approach and sit facing him on a long chair or upon the divan. I listened with a palpitating interest to the recitals that he made so amusing to me.

It was thus I learned all my ancient history, coming to the facts one after another, making reflections within my power, but remaining truly and profoundly observant; mature minds would have been able to listen without finding anything puerile in his teaching.

Sometimes I would stop him and ask: "Was he good?" And this question, applied to such men as Cambyses, Alexander or Alcibiades, was somewhat embarrassing for him to answer.

"Good?" he would say, "Yes . . . these were not very proper gentlemen, but . . . that is not the point."

But I was not satisfied, and I found that "my old boy," as I called him, knew even the smallest details of the people we were studying about.

The history lesson finished, we passed on to geography. He never wished me to study from a book. "Images, as many as possible," he said, "are the best means of learning in childhood." We had charts, spheres, games of patience which we could make and unmake together; then, to explain the difference between islands, peninsulas, bays, gulfs and promontories he would take a shovel and a pail of water and, in a little walk in the garden, make models of these in nature.

As I grew older, the lessons became longer and more serious. He continued them up to my seventeenth year, until my marriage. When I was ten years old, he obliged me to take notes while he was speaking, and when my mind was capable of comprehending it, he began to make me notice the artistic side of things, especially in my reading.

He considered no book dangerous that was well written; he held this opinion because of his intimate union of foundation and form: anything well written could not be badly thought out or basely conceived. It was not the crude detail, the raw fact that was pernicious or harmful, or likely to soil the intelligence; all that is in nature. There is nothing moral or immoral but the soul of him who represents nature, rendering it grand, beautiful, serene, small, ignoble, or tormenting. Such a thing as an obscene book well written could not exist, according to him.

Certainly he was very liberal in the reading he recommended to me, yet he was decided in allowing me nothing for amusement alone, and never would

permit me to leave a book unfinished. "Continue to read the history of the Conquest," he wrote me, "and do not allow yourself to begin books and then leave them for some time. When one undertakes to read a book, it should be finished at a single blow. It is the only way of seeing it as a whole and of deriving any profit from it. Accustom yourself to following this idea. Since you are my pupil, I do not wish you to have that disconnected way of thinking, a mind unable to follow out anything, which is the attribute of persons of your sex."

He held to this intellectual discipline, judging it to be very useful. His teaching sought to impress itself upon my mind in the strongest manner possible. So easy in some ways, he was very rigorous on certain points; thus, he wished that the virtue of a woman consisted not alone of purity of morals, but that she might add that to what is exacted in an honest man.

My lesson finished, my uncle would seat himself at his table in his high-back, oak armchair and there remain until seven o'clock, allowing himself only a moment from time to time, to go to his window and breathe large whiffs of air. Then we dined, and chatted together awhile, as after breakfast. At nine o'clock, or ten at the latest, he would again take up his work with zeal, prolonging it far into the night. He was never more in the spirit of it than in these solitary hours when no sound could come to trouble him.

He remained thus many months in succession, seeing no one but Louis Bouilhet, his intimate friend, who came each Sunday, staying until Monday morning. A part of the night was passed in reading the work of the week. What delightful hours of expan-

sion! There were loud cries of exclamation without end, some controversy over rejecting or keeping some epithet, or some reciprocal enthusiasm!

Three or four times a year, my uncle would go to Paris to pass some days at the house of the Helder's. All his distractions were limited to short absences. However, in 1856, having decided to publish *Madame Bovary*, he went to live at No. 42 Boulevard du Temple, in a house belonging to M. Mourier, director of the theatre of the *Délassements-Comiques*. Bouilhet was presenting his first piece, *Madame de Montarcy*, at the Odéon that year. He had already preceded his friend, left Rouen and his profession as tutor to live entirely by letters. My grandmother was not long in joining them; she spent some of the winter months in a furnished apartment, and two years later installed herself in the same house with her son, on the story above.

Although living so near, we were very independent. My uncle had taken into his service a valet named Narcisse, the queerest individual possible; he had been a domestic in my grandfather's house, and his drollery as well as his zeal prompted my uncle to engage him. Narcisse, an established farmer, married, and the father of six children, had left his wife and family with the greatest eagerness to follow the son of his old master for whom he had a respect amounting to fanaticism, but joined to that the greatest forgetfulness of difference in station. One day he returned completely drunk; my uncle perceived this and seated, or rather tumbled him into a chair in the kitchen. He aided him to reach his room, and to stretch himself out on the bed. Then Narcisse, in a supplicating air, said: "Ah! sir! complete your good-

ness by pulling off my boots." And this was done by the too indulgent master!

Our friends amused themselves with the reflections of this servant and his repartee; certain of them sent him their books. He was often found sitting in the study, or before a bookcase, with a feather duster under one arm and a book in his hand; he read in a high voice, imitating his master. But these artistic endeavours, joined to the abuse of small glasses, completely disordered the brain of the poor devil; and he was obliged to return to the fields.

During these winter months, I regretted the summer days because the great success of *Madame Bovary* followed by a famous lawsuit had given to my uncle a celebrity that made him sought after. He went out much and I saw less of him.

The apartment of the Boulevard du Temple blossomed on certain days. It was a pleasure to give little repasts there to our intimate friends; I remember those in which I took part and which had around the table Sainte-Beuve, Monsieur and Madame Sandeau, Monsieur and Madame Cornu, these last brought by Jules Duplan, the faithful friend of Gustave Flaubert; then Charles d'Osmoy, and Théophile Gautier came very often, and on Sundays the door was open wide and friends were numerous.

This epoch was for my uncle the beginning of relations which lasted until his death. He assiduously frequented the *salon* of the Princess Mathilde. He found gathered there scholars, artists, and some of his intimate friends; he relished strongly this intellectual and worldly life. He went also to the Tuileries and was invited to Compiègne; from his sojourn at the castle there came to him the thought of a great ro-

mance which should bring out the French and the Turkish civilisations.

Then he also had dinners at Magny which, in the beginning, numbered only half a score of people: Sainte-Beuve, Théophile Gautier, the two De Goncourts, Garvarni, Renan, Taine, the Marquis of Chennevières, Bouilhet and my uncle. Their conversations abounded in the highest interest.

Finally, the month of May arrived and we returned to the tranquil life at Croisset.

Beginning in 1860 to write *Salammbô,* my uncle soon perceived that a voyage to the site of what was once Carthage was necessary to him, and he set out for Tunis. On his return he accompanied his mother to Vichy. We went there the two years following.

My grandmother's health not permitting her to go out with me, my uncle took her place; he accompanied me in my walks and on Sunday even took me to church, in spite of the independence of his beliefs, or rather because of that independence. We often went when it was pleasant, and seated ourselves under the little white-leaved poplars along the main walk; he would read while I sketched, and interrupting his reading, he would speak to me of what it suggested to him, or begin to recite verse, or entire pages of prose which he knew by heart. What he most often recited was Montesquieu and Chateaubriand. His memory disclosed itself equally in dates or in historic facts. But let him recall some literary remembrance and he was truly surprising; in a volume read twenty years before he could name the page and the spot on the page which had pleased him; and, going straight to his library and opening

the book, he would say: "Here it is," with a certain satisfaction which made the light shine in his eyes.

At Vichy he returned to old acquaintances: Doctor Villemain whom he met in Egypt, and Lambert Bey, one of the adepts of the *Père Enfantin*.

My marriage came in 1864, changing all our life. I lived a great part of the year at Neuville near Dieppe, going no oftener to Croisset than twice a year, in the spring and in the autumn. My uncle made only short visits at my house; any change of place troubling him extraordinarily and disturbing his work. It was necessary for him to work at an extreme tension, and it was impossible for him to find himself in this state elsewhere than at his great round table in his study, where he was sure that nothing would distract him. This love of tranquillity, which he carried later to an excess, had begun already to exercise a tyranny upon his least action. At the end of a few days, I could see that he was nervous and I felt that he was desirous of returning to his beloved labour.

For ten years our lives were less mingled, save for the month of April in 1871. When I returned from England where I had passed some months, I found him much changed. The war had made a profound impression upon him; his "old Latin blood" had revolted at this return to barbarity. Obliged to flee from his house,—for he would not for anything in the world be under the necessity of speaking to a Prussian,—he took refuge in Rouen in a little lodging near the Havre quay where he was badly housed. This seemed to be a bereavement; my grandmother, now aged, no longer occupied herself with the management of the household, and instead of transporting

their furniture and necessary objects from the country to the town (and that would have been easy to do), they left all at Croisset, where a score of men, officers and soldiers, had established themselves.

The fatal lack of employment that a disturbed life brings, the thought of his study, his books, his home soiled by the presence of the enemy, brought to my uncle's heart and mind frightful anxiety and grief. The arts appeared to him dead. Why? Was it possible? Could it be that an intelligent country would cause these billows of blood? But there were scholars who were holding Paris in siege, and hurling projectiles against the monuments!

He thought that he should return to his house to find nothing there. He was deceived; save some trifling objects without value, such as cards, a penknife, or a paper-cutter, they had respected absolutely all that belonged to him. One thing only about the return was suffocating,—the odour of the Prussian, as the French call it, an odour of greased boots. The walls were impregnated with it, through their stay there of three long months, and it was necessary to paint and redecorate the rooms in order to get rid of it.

Six months passed without my uncle being able to write, and finally, he was at my house at Neuville when, yielding to my supplications, he began again, this time finishing *The Temptation of Saint Antony.*

There was in Gustave Flaubert's nature a sort of impossibility of being happy, and a tendency continually to turn back in order to compare and analyse. Even at the age of the most absolute joys, he dissected them so that he saw nothing in them but the skeleton of pleasure.

When, on descending the Nile, he wrote the pages entitled: *Au bord de la Cange,* he regretted his home on the banks of the Seine. The landscape under his eye never seemed to captivate him; it was later that he recalled it with pleasure, while man, with his foolishness, and his conversation, was intensely interesting to him. "Foolishness," he would say, "enters my pores." And when he was reproached for not going out more, or for remaining so much in the country, he would say indignantly: "But nature devours me! If I remain extended on the grass for a long time, I believe that I can feel the plants growing under my body"; and he would add: "You don't know what trouble confusion and change make me."

As to himself, in the most grievous events of his life he wrote down his sensations, seeking, scrutinising the most remote corners of his nature, however veiled or intimate. A fact in a newspaper, a droll story of people he knew, stupidities written by authoritative pens, the manifestation of their self-conceit or their greed, were to him so much subjects of experience that he recorded them and slipped them into his portfolio; he could not comprehend the art that sought only gain; according to him, mere money could not reward the artist; and between the five hundred francs which the editor Michael Lévy sent him for his five years' work on *Madame Bovary,* and the ten thousand francs which he received some years later for *Salammbô,* he saw very little difference.

In his note-books of travel in the Pyrenees at seventeen years of age, he pointed out the silliness of the reflections of travelers about Lake Gaube and the inn near Gavarnie. Even here is the beginning

of the *Dictionary of Accepted Ideas by Bouvard and Pécuchet.* This strong sense of the comic was useful in opposition to his love for the ideal, as his love for farce corrected his inborn melancholy.

III.

In 1875, the loss of a considerable sum of money changed our circumstances. My husband saw all that he had disappear in commercial transactions. Married under the dowry laws so common in Normandy, I could dispose of only a part of my property in his favour. My uncle made up the deficit with an entirely spontaneous generosity, giving all that he possessed to save our position. Nothing remained for him to live on except the interest that we had engaged to pay him, and the very mediocre revenue from his books. To sell Croisset was the thought which first presented itself to our minds; this property had been given me by my grandmother, with the expressed wish that her son Gustave should continue to live there. This consideration, added to my uncle's repugnance to separating himself from it, decided us in the resolution to keep it. Loneliness weighed upon his tender nature, and an arrangement of a life in common was agreeable to him. He passed the greater part of the time in the country; and, in Paris, having taken his apartment again in the Rue Murillo, we took one on the same landing, on the fifth floor of a house situated at the angle of the Rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré and the Avenue de la Reine-Hortense.

We were then together as formerly, and our confidential talks were more frequent, deeper and more intimate than those of my childhood's days. In the retired life that we led, my uncle spoke to me as to a friend; we talked on all subjects, but preferably those of literature, religion and philosophy, which we discussed without any anger or disagreeable results, although we were often of a different opinion.

It is easy to see that a man who could write *Saint Antoine* must be superabundantly occupied with religious thought as found in humanity, and its manifold manifestations. The old theogonies interested him extremely, and the excessive in all people had an infinite attraction for him. The anchorite, the recluse at the Thebans, provoked his admiration, and he felt towards them as towards the Bouddha on the bank of the Ganges. He often re-read his Bible. That verse of Isaiah: "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings!" he thought sublime. "Reflect, sift the thing to the bottom," he would say to me enthusiastically.

A pagan on his artistic side, he was, through the needs of his soul, pantheistic. Spinoza, whom he much admired, did not fail to leave his imprint upon him. Besides, no belief of his mind, save his belief in beauty, was so fixed that it was not capable of listening to the other side, and admitting even, up to a certain point, the obverse. He loved to repeat with Montaigne, what was perhaps the last word of his philosophy, that it is necessary to sleep upon the pillow of doubt.

But let us return to the work of the day. Here he is happy in reading to me the freshly hatched phrase that he has just finished; I assist, as a motionless

witness, the slow creation of these pages so laboriously elaborated. In the evening, the same lamp lights us, I, seated beside the large table, where I am employed with my needlework, or in reading; he, struggling with his work. Bent forward, he writes feverishly, then turns his back upon his work, strikes his arms upon those of his chair and utters a groan, for a moment almost like a rattle in the throat; but suddenly his voice modulates sweetly, swelling proudly: he has found the desired expression and is repeating the phrase to himself. Then he gets up and walks around his study with long steps, scanning the syllables as he goes and is content; it is a moment of triumph after exhausting labour.

Having arrived at the end of a chapter, he would often give himself a day of rest in order to read over at his ease what he had written, to see the "effect." He read in a unique fashion, chanting and emphasising so much that at first it seemed exaggerated, but ending in a way that was very agreeable. It was not only his own works that he read in this way; from time to time he would give real literary sessions, becoming impassioned with the beauty that he found; and his enthusiasm was communicative, so that it was impossible to remain cold, or keep from vibrating with him.

Among the ancients, Homer and Æschylus were his gods. Aristophanes gave him more pleasure than Sophocles, Plautus than Horace, whose merit he thought over-praised. How many times have I heard him say that he would prefer above all things to be a comic poet!

Shakespeare, Byron, and Victor Hugo he profoundly admired, but he never comprehended Milton. He

said: "Virgil has created the amorous woman, Shakespeare the amorous young girl; all others are more or less far-removed copies of Dido or Juliette."

In French prose he read again and again Rabelais and Montaigne, recommending them to all who wished to meddle with writing.

Literary enthusiasms had always existed in him; one that he loved to recall was that he experienced on his first reading of *Faust*. He read it on the eve of Easter as he was leaving college; instead of returning to his father's house, he found himself, not knowing how, in a spot called "Queen's walk." It is a beautiful promenade planted with high trees upon the left bank of the Seine, a little removed from the town. He was seated upon the steep bank; the clocks in the churches across the river resounded in the air and mingled with the poetry of Goethe. "Christ had arisen, peace and joy were complete. Announce then, deep bells, the beginning of the Easter day, celestial sounds, powerful and sweet! Why seek you me in the dust?" His head was turned and he came back like one lost in revery, scarcely realising things of earth.

How could this man, so great an admirer of the beautiful, find so much happiness in uncovering human turpitude, especially that found outside the realm of virtue? Must it not be from his worship of the true? His revelations seemed to be the confirmation of his philosophy and he rejoiced in them through love of that truth which he believed he was penetrating.

Numerous projects of work occupied his mind. He mentioned especially a story of the people of Thermopylæ that he intended to begin. He found

that he had lost too much time in the preparatory research for his works and wished to employ the rest of his life in art, pure art. His belief in form would cross his mind; this caused him one day to cry out in his whimsical spontaneity: "I attach myself to the Ideal!" Then immediately laughing at our applause, he said: "Not bad, that! Poetry, isn't it? I begin to comprehend art."

A true artist, for him, never could be wicked, for an artist is before all an observer; the first quality for an observer is to possess good eyes. If they are blurred with passion, or personal interest, things escape them; a good heart makes a good mind!

His worship of the beautiful led him to say: "The moral is not only a part of the æsthetic, but its condition foundationally."

Two kinds of men were especially displeasing to him and were ever a subject for his disgust: the critic who never produced anything, but judges all things (to whom he preferred a candle merchant), and the educated gentleman who believes himself an artist, who has imagined Venice different from what it is, and has had disillusions. When he met a person of this kind, there was an explosion of scorn which showed itself, perhaps through cutting answers (he would pretend that he had no imagination, never fancied anything nor knew anything) or through a silence still more haughty.

Up to the time of his death, I had the advantage of continuing that serious, calm life from which my feminine mind had so much to gain. Many of my uncle's best friends were dead: Louis Bouilhet, Jules Duplan, Ernest Lemarié, Théophile Gautier, Jules de Goncourt, Ernest Feydeau, and Sainte-Beuve, while

others were far away. His meetings with Maxime Ducamp were only rare; from 1852 the two friends no longer followed the same routes, as their correspondence witnesses.

In friendship my uncle was perfect; of a devotion absolutely faithful, without envy, happier in the success of a friend than in his own; but he brought into his friendly relations some exactions that those who were the object of them found it difficult to support. The heart that was bound to him by a common love of art (and all his deep attachments were upon this basis) should belong to him without reserve.

Wherefore, five years before his death, he received this short note in response to a package containing his *Three Stories*:—

"My Dear Friend: I thank you for your volume. I have not read any of it, for I am absolutely besotted by the finishing of a work of mine. I should have it done in eight or ten days and I shall then reward myself by reading you. Yours, Maxime Ducamp."

His heart suffered and recoiled on itself bitterly. Where now was the ardent desire of knowing quickly the thought that springs from the brain of a friend? Where were those beautiful years of youth? where was the faith in each other?

Nevertheless, there were still some natures that he loved much. Among the young, in the first rank, was the nephew of Alfred Le Poittevin, Guy de Maupassant, his "disciple," as he loved to call him. Then, his friendship with George Sand was for his mind no less than for his heart, a great comfort. But of his own generation, he often said that only Edmond de Goncourt and Ivan Tourgenief remained;

with them he tasted the full joy of æsthetic conversation. Alas! they became more and more rare, these hours of intimate talks, because, for this overflow of soul it was necessary to find minds taken up with the same things, and the sojourns in Paris became farther and farther apart. His solitude, always terrible, became unbearable when I was not there, and often, to escape it, he would call on the old nurse of his childhood. At her fireside his heart would become warm again. In a letter to me he said: "To-day I have had an exquisite conversation with 'Mademoiselle Julie.' In speaking of the old times, she brought before me a crowd of portraits and images which expanded my heart. It was like a whiff of fresh air. She has (in language) an expression of which I shall make use. It was in speaking of a lady, 'She was very fragile,' she said, 'thundering so!' *Thundering* after *fragile* is full of depth! Then we spoke of Marmontel and of the *New Heloise,* something that could not be done among ladies nor scarcely among gentlemen."

When he was much alone, he would sometimes take up his love of nature, which would relieve him from his work for a moment. "Yesterday," he wrote, "in order to refresh my poor noddle, I took a walk to Canteleu. After travelling for two solid hours, Monsieur took a chop at Pasquet's, where they were making ready for New Year's Day. Pasquet showed a great joy at seeing me, because I recalled to him 'that poor Monsieur Bouilhet'; and he sighed many times. The weather was so beautiful, the moon so bright in the evening that I went out to walk again at ten o'clock in the garden, 'under the glimmer of the stars of night.' You cannot imagine

what a lover of nature I have become; I look at the sky, the trees and the verdure with a pleasure I never knew before. I could wish to be a cow that I might eat grass."

But he would seat himself again at his table and let many months slip by without being seized with the same desire.

At the beginning of the year 1874, he began *Bouvard and Pécuchet,* a subject which had interested him for thirty years. He intended it at first to be very short—a novel of about forty pages. Here is how the idea came to him: Seated with Bouilhet on a bench of the Boulevard at Rouen, opposite the asylum for the aged, they amused themselves by dreaming of what they should be some day; and, having begun gaily the supposed romance of their existence, suddenly they cried: "And who knows? we may finish, perhaps, like these old decrepits in this asylum." Then they began to imagine the friendship of two clerks, their life, their retiring from business, etc., etc., in order finally to finish their days in misery. These two clerks became "Bouvard and Pécuchet." This romance, so difficult of execution, discouraged my uncle at more than one undertaking. He was even obliged to lay it aside and go to Concarneau to join his friend George Pouchet, the naturalist.

Down there, on the Brittany strand, he began the legend of *Saint Julian the Hospitaller,* which was immediately followed by *A Simple Soul* and *Hérodias.* He wrote these three stories rapidly and then took up *Bouvard and Pécuchet* again, a heavy care, under which he must die.

Few existences bear witness to unity so complete as his: his letters show that at nine years of age he

was preoccupied with art as if he were fifty. His life, as has been stated by all those who have spoken about him, was, from the awakening of his intelligence to the day of his death, the long development of the same passion — Literature. He sacrificed all to that; his love and tenderness were never separated from his art. Did he regret in the last years of his life that he had not followed the common route? Some words which came from his lips one day when we were walking beside the Seine made me think so: we had just visited one of my friends whom we had found among her charming children. "They are in the right," he said to me, alluding to that household of the honest and good family; "Yes," he repeated to himself, gravely, "they are in the right." I did not trouble his thoughts, but remained silent by his side. This walk was one of our last.

Death took him in full health. It was at evening, and his letter was all good cheer, expressing the joy he felt at seeing himself confirmed in a conjecture that he had made regarding a plant. He had written me these interesting lines upon his work, of which only a few pages remained: "I am right! I have the assurance of the Professor of Botany in the *Jardin des Plantes,* and I was right; because the æsthetic is true, and to a certain intellectual degree (when one has some method) one is not deceived; the reality does not yield to the ideal, but confirms it. It has been necessary for me to make three journeys into different regions for *Bouvard and Pécuchet* before finding their setting, that best fit for action. Ah! ha! I have triumphed! I flatter myself it is a success!"

He had made arrangements to set out for Paris to join me again. It was the day of his departure, he

was coming from the bath and mounting to his study; the cook was going up to serve his breakfast, when she heard him call and hastened to him. Already his tense fingers could not loosen a bottle of salts which he held in his hand. He tried to utter some words that were unintelligible in which she could distinguish: "Eylau — go — bring — avenue — I know him — "

A letter received from me that morning had told him that Victor Hugo was going to live in the Avenue d'Eylau; it was without doubt a remembrance of this news that he had in mind, as well as an appeal for help. He was cared for by his neighbor and friend, Doctor Fortin.

The last glimmer of his thought evoked the great poet who had caused his whole nature to vibrate. Immediately he fell into unconsciousness. Some moments later they found that he no longer breathed. Apoplexy had been the thunderbolt.

CAROLINE COMMANVILLE.

PARIS, *December, 1886.*

CORRESPONDENCE.

Louise Colet

TO MADAME X.

CROISSET,

Monday Night, June, 1853.

EELING myself in a grand humor of style this morning, after giving my niece her lesson in geography, I seized upon my *Bovary,* sketching three pages in the afternoon which I have just rewritten this evening. Its movement is furious and full, and I shall doubtless discover a thousand repetitions which it will be necessary to strike out as soon as I come to look it over a little. What a miracle it would be for me to write even two pages in a day, when heretofore I have scarcely been able to write three in a week! With the *Saint Antony* that was, indeed, the way I worked, but I can no longer content myself with that. I wish *Bovary* to be at the same time heavier and more flowing. I believe that this week will see me well advanced, and that in about a fortnight I shall be able to read Bouilhet the whole of the beginning (a hundred and twenty pages), which, if it goes well, would be a great encouragement, and I shall have passed if not the most difficult part at least the

most annoying. But there are so many delays! I am not yet at the point where I can credit our last interview at Mantes. What foolish and severe vexation you must have passed through that week, my poor friend! About cases like M ——, who throw themselves at your feet, the best thing to do is to pass the sponge over them immediately; but if you would care the least bit in the world for the elder Lacroix or the great Sainte-Beuve to receive something on the face or elsewhere, you have only to tell me and it is a commission of which I shall acquit myself with despatch on my next visit to Paris, in the old-time manner between two journeys; but could you not show Lacroix the door with a single word? What good is there in discussing, replying to, and angering him? This is all very easy to say in cold blood, is it not? It is always this accursed passion element which causes us all our annoyances. How true is Larochefoucauld's remark: "The virtuous man is he who allows himself to be concerned with nothing." Yes, it is necessary to bridle the heart, to hold it in leash like an enraged bulldog, and then let it loose at a bound at the opportune moment. Run, run, my old fellow, bark loudly and go at top speed; what these rogues have that is superior to us is patience. So in this story, Lacroix by his cowardly tenacity wearies De Lisle, who ends by becoming vexed and leaving the game and *Le Jeune irrité* (the whole of Sainte-Beuve is in these words) will not have had finally either a sword in his paunch or a foot to his coat-tails, and will privately begin his machinations anew, as Homais would say.

You are astonished to find yourself the butt of so much calumny, opposition, indifference and ill-will,

You will be more so and have more of it; it is the reward of the good and the beautiful: one may calculate the value of a man from the number of his enemies and the importance of a work by the evil said of it. Critics are like fleas which always jump upon white linen and adore lace. That reproach sent by Sainte-Beuve to the *Paysanne* establishes my belief in the *Paysanne* more firmly than Victor Hugo's praise of it; we give our praise to everybody, but our blame, no! Who is there that has not made a parody on the mediocre?

In regard to Hugo, I do not believe that it is time to write to him; you gave him a month for an answer, and it is not more than two weeks since our packet left; so it is necessary to wait at least as long as that, provided it has not been seized. Every precaution was taken, my mother addressing the letter herself.

What can this phrase in your letter this morning mean in speaking of De Lisle? "I believe that I was deceived in my impression of yesterday." The words of the *bourgeois* at Préault are good. Have I told you what a curate of Trouville said one day after I had dined with him? When I refused champagne (I had already eaten and drunk enough to make me fall under the table), my curate was astonished and turned on me an eye! such an eye! an eye expressing envy, admiration, and disdain together, and said to me, shrugging his shoulders: "Come, now! all you young people from Paris who *gulp down champagne* with your fine suppers, make very little mouths when you come to the provinces!" And it was so easy to understand that between the words "fine suppers" and "gulp" he meant to say "with

the actresses!" What horizons! and to know that I excited this brave man! In this connection I am going to allow myself a quotation: "Come now!" said the chemist, shrugging his shoulders, "do you know about these fine parties at the house of the traitor! the masked balls! the champagne? All this goes on, I assure you."

"I do not believe that it injures him," objected Bovary.

"Nor I either," quickly replied M. Homais, "and it may be necessary for him to keep them up or be taken for a Jesuit. But if you only knew what lives those fellows lead, in the Latin Quarter with their actresses! Generally speaking, students are well looked upon in Paris. For the little attractiveness that they have, they are received into the best society, and there are even ladies of the Faubourg Saint-Germain who fall in love with them and, in consequence sometimes give them opportunities of making fine marriages." In two pages I believe I have collected all the stupidity that one hears in the provinces about Paris,—student life, actresses, the pickpockets you encounter in the public gardens, and the cooking at the restaurants, "always more unwholesome than provincial cooking."

That stiffness of which Préault accuses me is astonishing; it appears that when I have on a black coat, I am not the same man. And it is certain that I am then wearing a kind of disguise which my face and manners ought to resent, so much effect has the exterior upon the interior. It is the cap that moulds the head, and all troopers have about them the imbecile stiffness of hard lines. Bouilhet pretends that, out in the world, I have the air of a drilled, *bourgeois*

officer. Is it on this account that the illustrious Turgan calls me "the major?" He also maintains that I have a military air, and one could pay me no compliment that would be less agreeable. If Préault knew me, he would, on the contrary, find that I have a too bare-breasted air like the good captain; but how beautiful Ferrat must have been with his "good southern fury;" I can see him there now gasconading; it is tremendous. And, speaking of the grotesque, I was overwhelmed at the funeral of Madame Pouchet; decidedly, the good God is romantic, for he continually mingles the two kinds together. Nevertheless, while I was looking at the poor Pouchet, who was in torture, shaking like a reed in the wind, do you know what came up before me? A gentleman who asked me, on my voyage: "What kind of museums have they in Egypt? *What is the condition of their public libraries?*" And when I demolished his illusions, he was desolate. "Is it possible!" said he. "What an unfortunate country! What a civilization!" etc. . . .

The burial was Protestant, the priest speaking in French beside the grave; Monsieur would prefer it so . . . "since Catholicism is denuded of the flowers of rhetoric." O humans! O mortals! and to think we are always duped, that we have the vanity to believe ourselves imaginative, when the reality crushes us! I went to that ceremony with the intention of elevating my mind to the point of penetration; to try to discover a few pebbles; and then—these blocks fell upon my head! The grotesque deafened my ears, and the pathetic was in convulsions before my eyes. Whence I draw (or rather withdraw) this conclusion: *It is never necessary to fear exaggerating;*

all the great ones have done it: Michael-Angelo, Rabelais, Shakespeare and Molière. It is a question of making a man take an injection when he has no syringe; well, we must fill the theatre with apothecaries' syringes; that is clearly the way to reach genius in its true centre, which is very ridiculous. But to suppress exaggeration, there must be continuity, proportion, and harmony in itself. If your good men have a hundred feet, your mountains should be twenty miles high; and what is the ideal if it is not a magnifying?

Adieu; work well, see only friends, mount to the ivory tower, and let come what may.

TO MADAME X.

CROISSET, *Saturday night.*

FINALLY I have finished my first part (of the second part); that is, I am at the point where I had intended to be at our last interview at Mantes; you see how great a delay this is! I shall pass still another week in re-reading all this and copying it, and a week from to-morrow I shall spout it to my lord Bouilhet. If this goes, a great anxiety will be removed, at least, and one good thing I can be sure of, that the foundation is well established; but I think however, that this book will have one great fault: that is, the fault of material proportion. I have already two hundred and sixty pages which contain only the preparation for action, some expositions, more

or less disguised, of character (it is true that they are graduated), and of landscapes and places. My conclusion, which will be the recital of the death of my little woman, her funeral, and the sorrow of the husband, will follow with sixty pages at least. There remains, then, for the body of the action one hundred and twenty, or one hundred and sixty pages at the most. Is this not a great defect? What reassures me (in a slight degree), however, is that this book is a biography rather than a gradual development. The drama is a small part of it, so the dramatic element is well drowned in the general tone of the book; perhaps it will not be noticed that there is a want of harmony between the different phases so much as in their development; and then, it seems to me that life itself is a little like this. Our passions are like volcanoes; they grumble continually, but the eruption is only intermittent.

Unfortunately, the French mind has such a rage for amusement, it is necessary for it always to be seeing things! It cares so little for that which is poetry for me, or for knowing the *exposition,* that perhaps, as one may strike it picturesquely through tableaux, or morally through psychological analysis, it may serve exceedingly well that I wear a blouse, or have the appearance of doing so.

This is not the only day that I have suffered from writing in this language and thinking in it! At bottom I am German! The force of study has rubbed off all my southern mists. I wish to make books where only phrases are written (if one may so put it), as one lives by breathing only air; what vexes me is the trickery of the plan, the combinations for effect, and all the calculations which are the art of it,

and upon which the effect of style depends exclusively.

And you, good muse, dear colleague in all (colleague comes from *colligere,* to bind together), have you worked well this week? I am curious to see that second recital. I have to recommend only two things: First, follow your metaphors closely; second, no details outside the subject; work in a straight line. *Parbleu!* We shall make some arabesques when we wish to, and better than anybody's. We must show the classicists that we are more classic than they, and make the romanticists turn pale with rage by surpassing their attempts. I believe the thing feasible, although of no importance. When a verse is good, it loses its school. A good verse by Boileau resembles a good verse by Hugo. Perfection has everywhere the same character, which is precision and justness.

If the book I am writing with so much trouble comes to any good, I shall have established two truths by its execution alone, which are for me axioms of knowledge: first, that poesy is purely subjective, that there are not in literature beautiful art subjects, and that Yvetot is worth as much as Constantinople; consequently, one may write one thing as well as another, it matters not what. The artist must raise all; he is like a pump, having in him a great duct which descends to the entrails of things, to the deepest stratum, and makes leap into the light, in giant jets, what was under the earth and seen by no one but himself.

Shall I have a letter from you on awakening? Your letters have not been numerous this week, my friend! But I suppose it is work which has kept you.

What an admirable face Father Babinet, member of the reading committee of the Odéon, will have! I can see now his *facies,* as my chemist would say, listening to the pieces as they are read.

There is taking place here an interesting case. A judge of the court of assizes, a brave man, is accused of killing his wife and then, having sewed her in a sack, of throwing her into the water. This poor woman had many lovers, and some one discovered at her house (it was a workman of the lowest class) a portrait and a letter from a gentleman, a chevalier of the Legion of Honor, a rallying Legitimist, Member of the General Council, of the Building Associations, etc., . . . of all the Associations, well known among the vestry, member of the Society of Saint-Vincent de Paul, of the Society of Saint-Regis, of the Children's Society, and all the humbugs possible; highly placed in fine society of the right kind, one of those persons who are an honour to a country and of whom it is said: "We are happy to possess such a gentleman"; and here, at a blow, it is discovered that this merry fellow has been carrying on relations (this is the phrase) with this merry lass—relations of the most disgusting kind, yes, Madame! Ah! great Heavens! I jeer like a beggar when I see all those fine people in the hands of the law; the humiliations these good gentlemen receive (they who find honours everywhere) seem to me to be the just punishment of their false pride. It is a disgrace to be always wishing to shine; it is debasing to mount to the heights and then sink into the mire with the mob! One should keep his level. And while there is not in my make-up much liking for democracy, I nevertheless love what is common, even ignoble, when it

is sincere. But that which lies, which poses, which affects a condemnation of passion and assumes a grimace of virtue, revolts me beyond all limits. I feel now for my kind a serene hatred, or an inactive pity which is akin to it. I have made great progress in two years, and the political state of things has confirmed my old theories à *priori*, upon the biped without feathers, whom all in all I consider a turkey and a vulture.

Adieu, dear dove.

TO MADAME X.

CROISSET, *Tuesday*, 1 *A. M.*

I AM overwhelmed; my brain is dancing in my head. I have been since six o'clock this evening until now recopying seventy-seven successive pages, and now they make but fifty-three. It is torture. The ramifications of my vertebræ to the neck, as M. Enault remarks, are broken from having bent my head so long. What with the repetition of words, the *alls*, the *buts*, the *fors* and the *howevers* I had to strike out, there is never any end to it, which is the way with this diabolical prose. There are, nevertheless, good pages, and I believe that, as a whole, it moves along; but I doubt if I shall be ready to read it all to Bouilhet on Sunday. Just think! since the end of February, I have written fifty-three pages! What a charming profession! It is like whipping cream when one would like to be rolling marbles.

I am very tired, but have, however, many things to say. I have just written four lines to Ducamp,

not for you; that would have been a reason for his showing you more malevolence — I know the man. This is the reason why I wrote him: to-day I received the last package of his photographs, of which I had never spoken to him, and the note was to thank him for it. That was all; I said nothing further. If, in the article on the philosophers, on Wednesday, he uses your name accompanied with any harmful allusions, I will do what you wish; but for my part, I should propose to break off squarely in a pretty, well-defined letter. However, do not let us torment ourselves, since the thing will doubtless not take place. It is Bouilhet's opinion (my note to-day is from a contrary hypothesis) that it is best to be on good terms when the rupture comes and be able to say to him: here is still another time that you are disobliging to me; good evening and good-bye. Do you understand?

As for Enault's article, it seems to me, good Muse, as if you had exaggerated it. It is stupid and foolish and all that, with its *feminosities,* "sensible woman," "younger woman," etc.— which have evidently come from Madame ——, who is jealous of you from all reports, and on that I would bet my head. It is our opinion, both Bouilhet's and mine, that he labours hard over his little monthly billets without ever saying anything. Bouilhet is profoundly indignant and proposes not even going to see him when he next goes to Paris; but what difference does it make to us, the opinion of my lord Enault, either written or spoken? As Ducamp said to Ferrat: Can you expect, in the midst of the whirlwind in which he lives, with his fascinating personality, his officer's badge, his receptions at the house of M. de Persigny, etc., that he could preserve enough perspi-

cacity to feel a new, original, or novel thing? Besides, in this arrangement, there may be something agreed upon. We never can turn a negro white and we never can hinder the mediocre from being mediocre. I assure you that if he were to say to me "I have had curvature of the spine or softening of the brain," it would make me laugh. Do you know what I found out to-day from his photographs? The only one he did not publish was the one representing our hotel at Cairo and the garden before our windows where I stood in Nubian costume; it is a bit of malice on his part. He wishes that I did not exist; I have weighed him, as have you and every body else. The work is dedicated to Cormenin, with a dedicatory epigraph in Latin, and in the text is an epigraph taken from Homer, all in Greek. The good Maxime does not know a declension, but that does not matter. He has had the German work of Leipsius translated and has pillaged it impudently (in the text that I looked over) without quoting it once. I heard that from a friend of his that I met on the train; you know I said he must have pillaged it, for there were all sorts of inscriptions that he never would have valued, which are not in the books that we meet in our travels, but which he reports as having been appreciated by him; it is like all the rest of his work. As for the *Paysanne,* the eulogy which Bouilhet wrote him about it (at the same time he wrote to De Lisle, a letter which has met with no response) is the cause, you may be sure, of his remark to Ferrat. Finally, all that is of very little importance. Still, we have been very much vexed all Sunday afternoon from it, these stories demoralising lord Bouilhet a little, in which respect I find him weak,

and me also, for I am caught in it. Frankly now, it is stupid to permit these fellows to trouble us so. In fact, I find that in injuries, stupidities, foolishness, etc., it is necessary to be angry only when something is said to one's face. Make grimaces at my back as much as you wish, my breeches alone contemplate you.

I love you so much when I see you calm and know that you are working well, and still more, perhaps, when I know that you are suffering, for then you write me such superb letters, so full of fire. But, poor dear soul, take care of thyself, and tax only in moderation thy southern fury, as you called it in speaking of Ferrat.

The advice of De Lisle relative to the *Acropole* is good. First, send the manuscript to Villemain as you sent it to Jersey (I have received no letter about it, which seems strange, and my mother will write some day to Madame Farmer if I receive nothing); you could even make some corrections if you find it necessary although it seems good to me, except about the Barbarians, which I persist in finding much the weakest; second, try to have it appear in the *Press;* third, we shall find some plan, you may be sure. Bouilhet will be there this winter and he will aid you. His last fossil, the third piece, "Springtime," is superb; there is in it a pecking of birds around gigantic nests which is gigantic in itself. But he gets too sad, my poor Bouilhet; it is necessary to straighten up and em . . . humanity which em . . . us! Oh! I shall be avenged! In fifteen years from now I shall have undertaken a great modern romance where they shall all pass in review. I think that *Gil Blas* has perhaps done this, and Balzac remotely, but the fault of

his style is that his work is rather more curious than beautiful and stronger than it is brilliant. These are projects of which I should not speak, as all my books are only the preparation for two, which I will finish if God lends me life. I mean this one and the Oriental story.

You must see the story of the journey that Enault has published on his return from Italy! He is a wag and a droll fellow, who will make an article in that cavalier fashion upon one with whom he has dined without first asking his permission. As for the article, it is simply stupid, and that one he wrote upon Bouilhet was no stronger. He underlines *bosom* and *rags,* exclaims "Eight children! O, Poesy!" paints the school where he thinks it probable there are a certain number of children that will be known to literature! No, if one does not keep himself from all this, *I say it in all seriousness,* there is danger of his becoming an idiot.

My father said repeatedly that he never would wish to be a doctor in a hospital for the insane, because if one dealt seriously with madness, he ended by becoming mad himself. It is the same in this case; from becoming too much disturbed by these imbeciles, there is danger of becoming such ourselves. Heavens! what a headache I have! I must go to bed! my thumb is hollowed by my pen and my neck is twisted.

I find Musset's observation of Hamlet that of a profound *bourgeois,* and this is the reason why: he reproaches the inconsistency of Hamlet, a sceptic, seeing with his eyes the soul of his father. But first, it was not the soul that he saw, but a phantom, a shadow, a thing, a materially living shadow,

which has no connection either in popular or in poetic ideas with the abstract idea of the soul. It is we, metaphysicians and modern people, who speak this language; and then, Hamlet did not *question* at all the philosophic sense, he was *dreaming*. I believe this observation of Musset's is not his own but Mallefille's; in the preface of his *Don Juan*, he is superficial, to my mind. A peasant in our day could see a phantom perfectly and, the next day in broad daylight, reflect in cold blood upon life and death, but not upon flesh and the soul. Hamlet was not reflecting upon the subtleties of some school, but upon human thoughts. On the contrary, it is this state of perpetual fluctuation in Hamlet, this vagueness in which he holds himself, this want of decision in will and solution in thought, which makes him sublime.

But *people of mind* will have their characters all of a piece and *consistent* (since they can have them so only in books). There is not an aim of the human soul which is not reflected in this conception. Ulysses is perhaps the strongest type in all ancient literature, and Hamlet of all modern.

If I were not so weary, I should express my thought at greater length; it is so easy to prattle about the beautiful; but to say in proper style "Shut the door," or "He has a desire to sleep," requires more genius than to make all the Courses of Literature in the world.

Criticism is the lowest round on the ladder of literature, nearly always in form and in moral value; incontestably it comes after the end-rhyme and the acrostic, which demand at least the work of some invention.

Now, adieu.

TO LOUIS BOUILHET.

TROUVILLE, *Aug.* 23, 1853.

WHAT a confounded rain! How it falls! Everything is imbedded in water! From my window I can see bonnets passing shielded by red umbrellas; barques are putting out to sea; I hear the chains of the anchors which they are raising with general imprecations addressed to the bad weather. If it lasts three or four days more, which seems to me probable, we shall pack up and return home.

Admire here one of the polite ways of Providence which would be hard to believe: in whose house have I lodgings? In the house of a chemist! And of whom is he the pupil? Of Dupré! Like him, he deals in Seltzer water! "I am the only one in Trouville who manufactures Seltzer water," he says. In fact, at eight o'clock in the morning I am often awakened by the noise of corks which go off unexpectedly. Pif! paf! The kitchen is the laboratory as well as kitchen; a monstrous still stands humbly among the stewpans:

> The frightful length of its copper smoking,

and often they cannot put on the dinner-pot because of pharmaceutical preparations. In order to go into the yard, it is necessary to pass over baskets filled with bottles. There creaks a pump which wets your legs; two boys are rinsing decanters; a parrot repeats from morning till night: "Have you breakfasted, Jacko?" and finally, a brat about ten years old, the son of

the house and the hope of the pharmacy, exercises in all sorts of athletics, such as raising himself from the ground by his teeth.

This journey to Trouville has brought the whole inner story of my life before me. I have dreamed much in this theatre of my passions. I now take leave of them forever, I hope; in the part of life that remains, there is time to say adieu to youthful sadness. I cannot conceal, however, that it has come back to me in waves, during the last three weeks. I have had two or three good afternoons in full sunlight, all alone upon the sand, where I found again some other sad things beside broken shells! But I have finished with it now, God be thanked! We shall now cultivate our garden and no more raise our head at the cry of the crows.

How I long to finish *Bovary*, *Anubis*, and my three prefaces, in order to enter a new period and give myself up to the "purely beautiful!" The idleness in which I have lived for some time gives me the cutting desire to transform through art all that is "myself," all that I have felt. I feel no need of writing my memoirs; my personality even repels me, and immediate objects seem hideous or stupid. I go back to former ideas. I arrange the barques into old-time ships. I undress the sailors who pass, to make savages of them walking naked upon the silver shores; I think of India, of China, of my Oriental story (of which fragments are coming to me), and I feel like undertaking gigantic epics.

But life is so short! I never can write as I wish, nor the quarter part of what I dream. All that force that we feel and that stifles us must die with us without being allowed to overflow!

I revisited yesterday a village two hours' journey from here, where I went with that good Orlowski when I was eleven years old. Nothing was changed about the houses, the cliff, or the fishing-boats. The women at the wash-house were sewing in the same position, the same number were beating their soiled linen in the same blue water, and it rained a little as in former times. It seemed, at certain moments that the universe had become immovable, that everything had become a statue, and that we alone were living. And how insolent nature is! What waggishness on her impudent visage! One tortures his mind trying to comprehend the abyss that separates him from her, but something comes up more farcical still, that is, the abyss that separates us from ourselves. When I think that here, in this place, on looking at this white wall off-setting the green, I had some heart throbs, and that I was full of "poesy," I am amazed, lost in a vertigo, as if I had suddenly discovered myself on the peak of a wall two thousand feet high.

This little work that I am doing, I shall complete this winter, when you are no longer there, poor old man! to arrange, burn, and, classify all my scribblings. With the *Bovary* finished, the age of reason will begin. And then, why encumber ourselves with so many souvenirs? The past eats up too much and we are never in the present, which alone is important in life. How I philosophise! I have need to, since you are there! It is difficult to write; words are wanting, and I should prefer being extended on my bear-skin, near you, discoursing "melancholically" together.

Do you know that in the last number of the *Review* our friend Leconte was very badly treated?

They are definitely low rascals; and "the phalanx" is a dog-kennel. All the animals there are much more stupid than ferocious. You who love the word "paltry," be assured that is what it is.

Write me an immeasurable letter as soon as you can, and embrace yourself for me; adieu.

TO MADAME X.

CROISSET, *Wednesday evening, Midnight.*

I HAVE taken up the *Bovary* again, and since Monday have five pages almost done; *almost* is the word, for it is necessary to take it up again. How difficult it is! I fear that my *comices* (primary meetings) may be too long; it is a hard place. I have there all the personages of my book in action and in dialogue, mingled with one another, and beyond them all is a great landscape which envelopes them; if I can succeed with it, it will be very symphonic.

Bouilhet has finished the descriptive part of his *Fossils*. His mastodon ruminating in the moonlight on a prairie is enormously full of poesy and will be, perhaps, to the public, the most effective of all his pieces! There only remains the philosophic part, which is the last. About the middle of next month, he will go to Paris to select a lodging where he can install himself the first of November. Would that I were in his place!

Decidedly, the article by Verdun on Leconte (which I have an idea is Jourdan's) is more stupid than hostile; I have laughed much at the comparison they

make with the *beautiful lines* of the *Fall of an Angel;* what bearish politeness! As for the *Indian Poems* and the piece about *Dies iræ,* not a word. There is a certain ingenuousness about them, but why call the *sperchius, sperkhios?* That seems to me a true *janoterie.* What has become of the good Leconte,—is he progressing with his Celtic poem?

I have been re-reading some of Boileau, or rather all of Boileau, and with my pencil on the margin. This seems to me truly strong; one does not tire of what is well written, for style is life! It is the blood of the thought! Boileau has a little river, straight, not deep, but admirably limpid and well within its banks; and that is the reason why the waters have not dried up; nothing is lost of what he wishes to say. But how much art he has used and with so little effort!

Within the next two or three years, I intend to re-read attentively all the French classics and to annotate them; this is work that will serve me in *my prefaces* (my work of literary critic, you know); I wish to state there the insufficiency of schools as they are, and to declare plainly that we make no claim to being one of them, we outsiders, nor is it necessary to be one of them. On the contrary, we are in the line of transmission; that seems to me strictly exact; it reassures and encourages me. What I admire in Boileau is what I admire in Hugo; and where one has been good, the other is excellent. There is only one standard of beauty; it is the same everywhere, although under different aspects, and more or less coloured by the reflections that dominate it. Voltaire and Chateaubriand, for example, were mediocre for the same reasons, etc. I shall try to make

it seen why the æsthetic critic is so much behind the historic and scientific critic; he has never had any base. The knowledge that is wanting is that of the anatomy of style; to know how a phrase is constructed, and where it should be attached. They study manikins and translations with professors,—imbeciles incapable of holding the instrument of the science they teach (I mean the pen), and the result is, they lack life!

Love! Love! the secret of the good God which does not easily give itself up,—the soul, without which nothing is understood.

When I have finished that (and the *Bovary* and *Anubis* first of all), I shall without doubt, enter into a new phase, and it seems slow getting there; I, who write so slowly, am gnawed by my plans. I wish to produce two or three long, epic antiques—romances in a grandiose setting, where the action may be forcefully fertile and the details rich in themselves, and luxurious and tragic as a whole; books of grand mural painting, of heroic size.

There was in the *Revue de France* (a fragment by Michelet upon Danton) a judgment of Robespierre that pleased me much; it stamped him as being in himself a government; and it was for that reason that all Republican governmental maniacs loved him. Mediocrity cherishes rules, but I hate them. I feel myself against them and against all restrictions, corporations, caste, hierarchy, levels, and droves, with an execration that fills my soul; it is on this side, perhaps, that I comprehend the martyr.

Adieu, beautiful ex-democrat.

TO MADAME X.

CROISSET, *Wednesday, Midnight.*

HAVE you still your tooth? Take steps, then, immediately to have it removed. There is nothing in the world worse than physical pain; and it is worse than death for a man, as Montaigne says, "to put himself under the skin of a calf to escape it." Pain has this evil: it makes us feel life too much; it gives us, as it were, a proof of malediction to ourselves which weighs upon us; it humiliates us, and that is sad for beings that are sustained solely by their pride.

Certain natures suffer not so much, and people without nerves are happy; but of how many things are they not deprived? According as one rises in the scale of being, the nervous faculty increases, that is, the faculty for suffering. Are to suffer and to think the same thing, then? Is genius, after all, only a refinement of pain, that is to say, a meditation of the objective through the soul?

The sadness of Molière came wholly from the human stupidity which he felt contained in himself; he suffered from the Diaforus and Tartuffes which passed before the eyes of his brain. Do you not suppose that the soul of a Veronese imbibes colour like a piece of stuff plunged into the boiling vat of a dyer? All things appear to him as if magnifying glasses were before his eyes. Michael-Angelo said that marble trembled at his approach; what is sure is, that he himself trembled when he approached marble. Mountains, for this man, had souls; they were of a corresponding nature and there was a sympathy between

them like that between analogous elements. And this should establish, I know not where or how, some kind of volcanic train that would make poor human implements explode.

I find myself nearly half through my *comices.* I have made fifteen pages this month, not finished them,—but whether they are good or bad, I know not. How difficult dialogue is when one especially wishes it to have character; to paint by dialogue, and keep it lively, precise, and distinguished while it remains commonplace is monstrous, and I know of no one who has done this in a book. It is necessary to write the dialogue in comedy, while the narrative takes the epic style.

This evening I began again that accursed page about the lamps which I have already written four times; it is enough to make one beat his head against a wall! I am trying to paint (in one page) the gradations of the enthusiasm of a multitude watching a good man as he places many lamps in succession upon the outside of the mayor's residence; it is necessary to make seen the crowd howling with astonishment and joy, and that without any apparent motive or reflection on the part of the author.

You are astonished at some of my letters, you say; you find in them well-written, pretty malice; well, I write what I think; but when it comes to writing for others, and making them speak as they would have spoken, what a difference! A moment ago, for example, I was trying to show in a dialogue a particular man who must be at the same time good-natured, commonplace, a little vulgar and pretentious! And beyond all this one must make sure that the point is clear. In a word, all the difficul-

ties that we have in writing come from a lack of order. It is a conviction that I now have, that if you are troubled to give the right turn to an expression, it is sure that *you have not the idea.* A very clear image or sentiment in the head leads to the word on paper. The one flows from the other. "Whatever is well conceived," etc. . . . I have been re-reading this in old father Boileau; or rather I have read him entirely again (I am now on his prose works), and find him a master man and a great writer rather than a poet. But how stupid they have made him out! What paltry interpreters he has had! The race of college professors, pedants of pale ink, have lived upon him and stretched him thin, chattering over him like a cloud of locusts in a tree. He was not dense! No matter, he was solid of root and well planted, straight and well-poised.

The literary critic seems to me a thing to be made anew; those who have meddled with it are not of the trade, and while perhaps they know the anatomy of a phrase, they have not a drop of the physiology of style.

And about *La Servante?* Why was I afraid that it would not be long? Because it is better to be too long than too short, although the general defect of poets is the length, as it is of prose writers, which makes the first wearisome and the second disgusting. Lamartine, Eugene Sue. . . . Verse in itself is so convenient for disguising the absence of ideas! Analyse a beautiful passage of verse and another of prose, and you will see which is the fuller. Prose, art aside, must needs bristle with things to be discovered; but in verse the most trifling things appear. Thus we may say in comparison that the most unnoticed idea

in a phrase of prose may suffice to make a whole sonnet; often, three or four plans are necessary in a prose work; do we expect to find this in poetry?

I have at this moment a great rage for Juvenal. What style! what style! and what a language Latin is! I also flatter myself that I begin to understand Sophocles a little. As for Juvenal, it goes along smoothly enough, save here and there for some hidden meaning, which I quickly perceive. I should much like to know, and with many details, why Saulcy refused Leconte's article; what are the motives alleged? This must be interesting for us to know; try to get at the last word of the story.

Try to be better and to work better in Paris than in the country, for you have all your time to yourself. I grudge this poor Leconte his experience. In order to follow this trade as Bouilhet has for four years, eight and ten hours a day (and he had the boarding-house keepers at his back more than Leconte), I believe it is necessary to have the strongest constitution and a cerebral temperament of Titanic endurance. He will have merited glory as much as the other, but one can go to heaven only as a martyr, mounting on high with a crown of thorns, a pierced heart, bleeding hands and radiant face.

Adieu; a thousand kisses for thee!

TO MADAME X.

CROISSET, *Wednesday, Midnight.*

MY HEAD is on fire, as I remember to have had it after passing long days on horseback, because to-

day I have rudely ridden my pen. I have written since half-past twelve without stopping (save for five minutes at one time and another to smoke a pipe, and about an hour for dinner). My *comices* were such a trial to me that I have broken loose from them, even to the extent of calling them finished, both Greek and Latin; from to-day, I do no more of them; it is too hard! it would be the death of me, and I wish to go to see you.

Bouilhet pretends that it will be the most beautiful scene in the book. What I am sure of is that it will be new and that the intention is good. If ever the effects of a symphony were reported in a book, it will be here. It is necessary for the roar to be heard through it all: the bellowing of the bulls, the sighs of love, and the phrases of the administrators at once distinguishable; and over all the sunlight and the gusts of wind that fan the large bonnets into motion. The most difficult passages of *Saint Antony* were child's play in comparison. I have come to nothing dramatic except the interlacing of the dialogue and opposition in characters. I am now in the open; before another week, I shall have passed the knot upon which all depends. My brain seems too small to take in at a single glance this complex situation. I have written ten pages at a time, skipping from one phrase to another.

I am almost sure that Gautier did not see you in the street when he did not salute you; he is like myself, very near-sighted, and with me such things are customary. It would have been a gratuitous insolence, which is not his manner of behaviour; he is a great, good-natured man, very peaceful and very p——. As for espousing the animosities of a friend,

I strongly doubt it, from the way in which he spoke to me in the first place. The dedication, in spite of your opinion, proves nothing at all *pro* or *con*. The poor boy hangs to everything, tacks his name to everything that is descending this Nile! If anyone could strengthen me in my literary theories, it would be he. The farther off the time when Ducamp followed my advice, the more he goes down; for, between *Galaor* and the *Nil* there is a frightful decadence, and in the *Livre posthume*, which is between them, he is at his lowest, and the force of the young Delessert is no better. Jacotot's proposition was strangely revolting to me, and you were in the right. You try to be polite to a scamp like that? oh! no, no, no!

What a strange creature you are, dear friend, to send me diatribes still, as my chemist would call them. You ask me for a thing, I say "Yes," and you still continue to mutter! Oh, well! since you conceal nothing from me (which I approve), I will not conceal from you that this appears to me to be a bad habit with you. You wish to establish between relations of a different nature a bond of which I cannot see the sense or the utility. I do not at all comprehend how the kindnesses you show me when I am in Paris, affect my mother in any way. For three years I have been at the Schlesingers', where she has never set foot. In the same way, Bouilhet has been coming here every Sunday for eight years to sleep, dine and lunch, but we have not once seen his mother, who comes to Rouen nearly every month; and I assure you that my mother is not at all shocked. Nevertheless, it shall be according to your wish. I promise you, I swear it, that I will explain to her

your reasons and that I will pray her to bring it about that you may see each other. As for the outcome, with the best will in the world, I can do nothing; perhaps you will please each other much, perhaps you will displease each other enormously. The good woman is not very approachable, and she has ceased to see not only all her old acquaintances but even her friends; I know only one of them and she does not live in the country.

I have just finished Boileau's Correspondence; he was less narrow among his intimates than in *Apollon*. I found there many confidences that corrected his judgments. *Télémaque* was harshly enough judged, etc., and he avows that Malherbe was not a poet. But have you not noticed of how little value is the correspondence of the great men of that time? It is, in fact, all commonplace. Lyricism in France is a new faculty; I believe that the education of the Jesuits has been a considerable misfortune to letters. They have taken nature away from art. Since the end of the sixteenth century, even to the time of Hugo, all books, however beautiful they may be, smell of the dust of the college. I am now going to re-read all my French and to take a long time to prepare my history of the poetical sentiment of France. It is necessary to write criticism as one would write a natural history, *with the absence of moral idea;* it is not for us to declaim upon such and such a form, but to show in what it consists, how it is attached to another and by what it lives (æstheticism awaits its Saint-Hilaire, that great man who has shown the legitimacy of monsters). When the human soul is treated with the impartiality with which physical science is treated in the study of material things, an im-

mense step will have been taken; it is the only means by which humanity can put itself above itself. It will then consider itself frankly through the mirror of its works; it will be like God and judge from on high.

Well, I believe that feasible; perhaps, as in mathematics, we have only to find the method. Before all, it will be applicable to art and to religion, which are the two great manifestations of the idea. Suppose one begins thus: the first idea of God being given (the most simple possible), the first poetic sentiment being born (the most slender that could be), each finds at first its manifestation, and easily finds it in the savage infant, etc.; here is, then, the first point: you have already established relations. Now, if one were to continue, making count of all relative contingents, climate, language, etc.; then, from degree to degree one could come up to the art of the future, and the hypothesis of the Beautiful, to a clear conception of its reality, to that ideal type where all our effort should tend; but it is not for me to charge myself with this task, for I have other pens to cut.

Adieu.

TO MADAME X.

CROISSET, *Friday, Midnight,* 1854.

I HAVE passed a sad week, not because of my work, but on your account, and because of my thoughts concerning you. I will tell you more privately the personal reflections that were the result of this state of mind.

You believe that I do not love you, my poor dear friend, and say that you are only a secondary consideration in my life. I have hardly any human affection for anyone greater than I feel for you, and as for affection towards woman, I swear to you that you stand first in my heart,—the only one; and I will affirm further: I never have felt a similar love—so prolonged, so sweet, above all, so profound.

As to the question of my immediate installation in Paris, I must give up the plan at once; it is *impossible* to carry it out now, to say nothing of the money I should have but have not. I know myself well: it would mean the loss of the winter; and perhaps of my book. Bouilhet spoke very easily about it, he, who is fortunate enough to be able to write anywhere, who for twelve years worked in continual confusion. But for me it is like beginning a new life. I am like a pan of milk—in order that cream shall rise, I must not be disturbed! But I say to you again: if you *wish* that I should come, now, instantly, for a month, two months, four months, cost what it may, I will go. If not, this is my plan: from the present time until I finish *Bovary*, I will visit you oftener,—eight times in two months, without missing a week, except for that time when you will not be able to see me until the end of January. Then we shall meet regularly through April, June, and September, and in a year I shall be very near the end of my book.

I have talked over all this with my mother. Do not accuse her, even in your heart, because she is on your side. I have concluded pecuniary settlements with her, and she is about to make arrangements for the care of my rooms, my linen, etc., for a year. I have engaged a servant whom I shall take to Paris, so

you see that my resolution is not wholly unshakeable, and if I am not buried here under about three hundred pages, you may see me before long installed in the capital. I shall disturb nothing at my rooms, because I always work best there, and I shall probably pass most of my time there, on account of my mother, who is growing old; so reassure yourself, I shall show enough filial affection, and be very good!

Do you know whither the sadness of all this has led me, and what I should like to do? I should like to throw literature to the winds forever, to do nothing more, but go and live with you! I say to myself; Is art worth so much trouble, so much weariness for me, so many tears for her? Of what use is all this effort, perhaps to arrive only at mediocrity in the end? For I own to you that I am not cheerful; I have sad doubts at times regarding myself and my work. I have just re-read *Novembre,* from curiosity. I did the same thing eleven years ago to-day. I had so far forgotten it that it seemed quite new to me, but it is not good, and the effect is not satisfactory. I see no way of re-writing it; I should be compelled to recast it entirely, because although here and there I find a good phrase, a good comparison, there is no homogeneity of style. Conclusion: *Novembre* will go the same way with *Sentimental Education,* and will remain with it indefinitely in my portfolio. Ah, what good sense I showed in my youth not to publish! How I should have blushed for it now!

I am about to write a monumental letter to the "Crocodile." Hasten to send me yours, because it is several days since my mother wrote to Madame Farmer, and she persecutes me to let her read my letter before I send it away.

I am re-reading Montaigne. It is singular how I am filled with the spirit of this good fellow! Is this a coincidence, or is it because when I was eighteen years old I read only Montaigne during a whole twelvemonth? I am really astonished, however, to find very often in his writings the most delicate analysis of my own sentiments. He has the same tastes, the same opinions, the same manner of living, the same manias. There are persons I admire more than Montaigne, but there is no one I would evoke more gladly, or with whom I could talk better.

Thine ever.

TO LAURENT PICHAT
(Director of the *Revue de Paris.*)

CROISSET, *Thursday evening,* 1856.

MY DEAR FRIEND: I have just received the *Bovary*, and I feel that I must thank you immediately (for if I am somewhat churlish, I am not an ingrate). You have rendered me a great service in accepting this work, such as it is, and I shall not forget it.

Confess that you have found me, and that you still find me (more than ever, perhaps) possessed of a ridiculous amount of vehemence. I should like to own some day that you are right; I promise that when that time comes I will make you the most abject excuses! But understand, dear friend, that it was only an experiment I attempted, and I hope the workmanship is not too crude.

Will you believe me when I tell you that the ignoble realism you find in my story, the reproduction of which disgusts you, revolts me quite as much? If you knew me better, you would know that I hold commonplace existence in execration. I always seclude myself from it as much as possible. But, for æsthetic purposes, I wished this time — and only this time — to exploit it from its very foundation. So I have undertaken the matter in a heroic way; I listened to the minutest details; I accepted all, said all, painted all, — an ambitious attempt.

I explain myself badly, but it is enough that you comprehend the reason for my resistance of your criticisms, judicious as they were. You will make another book for me! You struck at the poetic foundation whence springs the type (as a philosopher would say) from which the work was conceived. In short, I should have failed in what I owe to myself, and also in what I owe to you, if I had yielded as an act of deference and not of conviction.

Art demands neither complaisance nor politeness, — nothing but faith — faith and liberty! And on that point we may join hands!

Under an unfruitful tree, whose branches are always green, I am Faithfully yours.

TO ERNEST FEYDEAU.

1857.

MY GOOD FRIEND: I believe it is always considered proper to wash one's soiled linen. Now I will wash mine immediately. You say you have been "very

much vexed" at me, and you must feel so still, if you really suppose that I had, in company with Aubeyet, said anything against either yourself or your works. I am writing this in all seriousness. Such an accusation chokes me, wounds me. I am made so —I cannot help it. Know, then, that such cowardly conduct is completely antipathetic to me. I do not allow anyone to say, in my presence, anything about my friends that I would not say myself to their faces. And if a stranger opens his mouth to lie about them, I close it for him immediately. The contrary custom is the usual thing, I know, but it is not my way. Let us have no more discussion of this! If you do not know me better than that by this time, all the worse for you! Let us consider less serious matters, and give me your word of honour, for the future, never again to judge me as if I were a stranger.

Know also, O Feydeau! that I am not a bit of a *farceur*. There is no animal in the world more serious than I! Sometimes I laugh, but I joke very little, and less now than ever before. I am sick, as a result of fear; all sorts of anguish fill my being. I am about to write once more!

No, my good fellow, I'm not so stupid! I shall not show you anything of my story of Carthage until the last line is written, because I am already assailed with doubts enough about it without adding to them those you would express. Your observations would make me "lose the ball." As to the archæology, that will be "probable." And that's all! Provided no one can prove that I have written absurdities, that is all I ask. As to the botanical queries that may arise, I can laugh at them. I have seen with my

own eyes all the plants and all the trees that I need for my purpose.

Besides, all this matters very little; it is quite a secondary consideration. A book may be full of enormities and blunders, and yet be none the less beautiful. If this doctrine were admitted, it would be considered deplorable, of course; especially in France, where reigns the pedantry of ignorance! But I see in the contrary tendency (which is mine, alas!) a great danger. The study of the external makes us forget the soul. I would give the half-ream of notes that I have written during the past five months, and the ninety-eight books that I have read, to be, for three seconds only, really stirred by the passion and emotion experienced by my heroes! Let us guard against the temptation to deal with trifles, or we shall find ourselves belonging to the coffee-cup school of the Abbé Delille. There is at present a school of painting which, in order to make us admire Pompeii, adopts a style more *rococo* than that of Girodet. I believe, then, that one must love nothing, that is, we should preserve the strictest impartiality towards all objectives.

Why do you persist in irritating my nerves by saying that a field of cabbages is more beautiful than a desert? Permit me first to beg that you will go and look at the desert before talking about it! And even if there is anything as beautiful, go there just the same. But in your expression of a preference for the *bourgeois* vegetable, I see only an attempt to enrage me, which has been quite successful.

You will not have from me any criticism written on *l'Été* because, first, it would take too much of my time; and second, I might say things that would vex

you. Yes, I am afraid of compromising myself, for I am not sure of anything, and that which displeased me might, after all, be the best thing I could have said. I shall wait for your brutal and unwavering opinion regarding *l'Automne*. *Le Printemps* pleased and entranced me, without any restrictions. As to *l'Été*, I have made a few.

Now,—but I must stop, because my observations may be directed against an affair that is already settled, which perhaps is a good thing—I do not know. And as there is nothing in the world more tiresome or stupid than an unjust criticism, I will withhold mine, although it might have been good. So that is all, my dear old boy! You accused me in your mind of a cowardly action. This time you have reason to call me cowardly, but the cowardice is only that of prudence.

Are you amusing yourself? Do you employ your preservatives, impure man? What a wicked fellow is my friend Feydeau, and how I envy him! As for me, I worry myself immeasurably. I feel old, tired, withered. I am as sombre as a tomb and as crabbed as a hedgehog.

I have just read Cohan's book from one end to the other. I know that it is very faithful, very good, very wise, but I prefer the old *Vulgate*, because of the Latin. How swelling it is, compared with this poor, puny, pulmonic little Frenchman! I will show you two or three mistranslations (or rather, embellishments) in the said *Vulgate*, which have more beauty than the real meaning.

Go on and amuse yourself, and pray to Apollo to inspire me, for I am sadly flattened out.

Thine ever.

TO ERNEST FEYDEAU.

CROISSET, *Sunday evening,* 1858.

WHAT has become of you? As for myself, I have passed nearly four days in sleeping, because of extreme fatigue; then I wrote my notes of travel, and my lord Bouilhet has come to visit me.

During the week that he has been here we have been digging ferociously. I must tell you that the story of Carthage is to be completely changed, or rather, to be written over again, as I have destroyed the whole of the original! It was absurd, impossible, false!

I believe now that I have struck the right note at last. I begin to comprehend my personages, and already feel a great interest in them. I do not know when I shall finish this colossal work. Perhaps not before two or three years. From now on, I shall beg everyone that meets me not to talk to me. I should like to send out notes announcing my death!

My course of action is planned. For me, the public, outside impressions, and time, exist no more. To work!

I have re-read *Fanny,* at a single sitting, although I already knew it by heart. My impression has not changed, but the whole effect seems to be more rapid in movement, which is good. Do not disturb yourself about anything, nor think any more about this. When you come here next, I shall allow myself to point out to you two or three insignificant details.

About the middle of next week, *Montarcy* is to be played. Then, at the beginning of next month,

Bouilhet will return to Mantes, and my mother will go to Trouville for a little visit of about a week. After that, my dear sir, we shall expect you.

Will that be convenient and agreeable? Why have you not sent me any news of yourself, you rascal? What are you writing? What are you doing? How about Houssaye? etc.

As for myself, I take a river bath every day. I swim like a triton. My health never has been better. My spirits are good, and I am full of hope. When one is in good health he should store up a reserve of courage, in order to meet disappointments in the future. They will come, alas!

I believe that in the Rue Richer there is a photographer who sells views of Algiers. If you could find me a view of Medragen (the tomb of the Numidian kings), near Algiers, and send it to me, I should be very grateful.

TO JULES DUPLAN.

1858.

I HAVE arrived, in my first chapter, at the description of my little woman. I am polishing up her costume—a task that pleases me. It has set me up not a little. I spread myself out, like a pig, on the stones by which I am surrounded; I think that the words "purple" or "diamond" are in every phrase in the chapter. And gold lace!—but I must not say any more about it.

I shall certainly have finished my first chapter by the time you see me again (that will not be before

December), and perhaps I shall have advanced considerably with the second, although it will be impossible to write it in haste. This book [*Salammbô*] is above all things a grouping of effects. My processes in beginning this romance are not good, but it is necessary to make the surroundings *seem real* at the very outset. After that there will be enough of details and ornament to give the thing a natural and simple effect.

Young Bouilhet has begun his fourth act.

Have you had a good laugh at the fast ordered by Her Majesty Queen Victoria?

I think it is one of the most magisterial pieces of absurdity that I ever have known; it is amazing! O Rabelais, where is thy vast mouth?

TO MADEMOISELLE LEROYER DE CHANTEPIE.

December 26, 1858.

You may think that I have forgotten you, but I have done nothing of the kind! My thoughts are often turned towards you, and I address myself to the "unknown God," of whom St. Paul speaks, in prayers for the comfort and satisfaction of your spirit. You hold in my heart a very high and pure place; you would hardly believe me if I should tell you what a marvellous depth of sentiment your first letters touched in me. I must tell you of all that I feel, at some better time than this. We must meet soon, to clasp each other's hands, that I may press a kiss upon your brow!

This is what has happened since I wrote my last letter:

I was in Paris for ten days, where I assisted and co-operated in the last performances of *Hélène Peyron.* This is a very beautiful play, and it is also a great success. Making calls, reading the journals, etc., kept me very busy, and I returned here worn out, as usual, and as to the moral effect, I was disgusted with all that uproar. I fell upon my *Salammbô* again with fury.

My mother has gone to Paris, and for a month I have been entirely alone. I have begun my third chapter, and the story is to have twelve. You can judge how much remains for me to do. I have thrown the preface into the fire, although I worked two months on it this summer. But I am just beginning, *at last,* to feel entertained by my own work. Every day I rise at noon, and I retire at four o'clock in the morning. A white bear is not more solitary and a god is not more calm. It was time! I think of nothing but Carthage, and it is necessary that I should. To write a book has always meant to me the necessity of imagining myself to be actually living in the place described. This will explain my hesitations, my distress of mind, and my slowness.

I shall not return to Paris until the last of February. Between now and that time you will see in the *Revue Contemporaine* a romance by my friend Feydeau, which is dedicated to me, and which I hope you will read.

Do you keep yourself informed as to the works of Renan? They would interest you, and so would the new book by Flourens, on the *Siège de l'âme.*

Can you guess what occupies me at present? The maladies of serpents (always for my Carthage book)! I am about to write to Tunis to-day on this subject. When one wishes to be absolutely accurate in such writing, it costs something! All this may seem rather puerile, or even foolish. But what is the use of living if one may not indulge in dreams?

Adieu! A thousand embraces. Write to me as often as you wish, and as freely as you can.

TO ERNEST FEYDEAU.

CROISSET, *Thursday.*

I HAVE not forgotten you at all, my dear old boy, but I am working like thirty niggers! I have finally finished my interminable fourth chapter from which I have stricken out that which I liked best. Then, I have made the plan of the fifth, written a quantity of notes, etc. The summer has not begun badly. I believe that the work will go smoothly now, but perhaps I delude myself. What a book! Heavens! It is difficult!

Yes, I find, contrary to D'Aurevilly, that there is now a question of hypocrisy and nothing else. I am alarmed, amazed, scandalised at the transcendent poltroonery that possesses the human race. Everyone fears "being compromised." This is something new, —at least, to such a degree as appears. The desire for success, the necessity, even, of succeeding, *because of the profit to be made,* has so greatly demoralised

literature that one becomes stupid through timidity. The idea of failure or of incurring censure makes the timid writer shake in his shoes. "That's all very well for you to say, you, who collect your rents," I think I hear you remark. A very clever response, the inference of which is that morality is to be relegated to a place among objects of luxury! The time is no more when writers were dragged to the Bastille. It might be rebuilt, but no one could be found to put in it.

All this will not be lost. The deeper I plunge into antiquity, the more I feel the necessity of reforming modern times, and I am ready to roast a number of worthy citizens!

Do not think any more about *Daniel.* It is finished. It will be read, be sure of that.

When you come to Croisset, before setting out for Luchon (about the beginning of July, I suppose), bring me the detailed plan of *Catherine.* I have several ideas on your style in general and on your future book in particular.

You are a rascal! You compromise my name in public places! I shall attack you in a court of justice for a theft of titles.

I have two pretty neighbours who have read *Daniel,* twice running. And the coachmen of Rouen fall off their seats while reading *Fanny* (historic)!

À propos of morality, have you read that the inhabitants of Glasgow have petitioned Parliament to suppress the models of nude women in the schools of drawing?

Adieu, old boy; dig hard!

What news of your wife? Why is she at Versailles? It is an atrocious place, colder than Siberia.

TO EDMOND AND JULES DE GONCOURT.

CROISSET, *May*, 1860.

I MUST tell you of the pleasure I had in reading your two books. I found them charming, full of new details and having an excellent style, showing at the same time nervous power and lofty imagination. That is history, it seems to me, and original history.

One sees in them always the soul within the body; the abundance of details does not stifle the psychological side. The moral is revealed beneath the facts, without declamation or digression. It *lives*,—a rare merit.

The portrait of Louis XV., that of Bachelier, and above all, that of Richelieu, seem to me to be products of the most finished art.

How much you make me love Madame de Mailly! She actually excites me! "She was one of those beauties . . . like the divinities of a bacchante!" Heavens! You certainly write like angels!

I know of nothing in the world that has interested me more than the finale of *Madame de Châteauroux*.

Your judgment of the Pompadour will rest without appeal, I fancy. What could anyone say after you?

That poor Du Barry! How you love her, do you not? I love her, too, I must confess. How fortunate you are, to be able to occupy yourselves with all that sort of thing, instead of diving into nothingness, or working upon nothingness, as I must work.

It is altogether charming of you to send me the book, to have so much talent, and to love me a little!

I clasp your four hands as warmly as possible, and am ever your

G. FLAUBERT,

Friend of Franklin and of Marat; factionist, and anarchist *of the first order*, and for twenty years a disorganiser of despotism on two hemispheres!!!

TO EDMOND AND JULES DE GONCOURT.

CROISSET, *July 3*, 1860.

SINCE you appear to be interested in my *Carthage*, this is what I have to tell you about it:

I believe that my eyes have been larger than my belly! To present the *reality* is almost impossible with such a subject. One's only resource is to make the thing poetic, but there is danger of falling into the way of employing the old, well-known tricks of speech that have been used from *Télémaque* to the *Martyrs*.

I say nothing of the archæological researches, the labour of gathering which must not be evident, nor of the language and the form, which are almost impossible to handle. If I tried to write with absolute accuracy of detail, the work would be obscure; I should be compelled to use abstruse terms, and to stuff the volumes with notes. And if I should preserve the usual French literary tone, the work would become simply banal. Problem! as Father Hugo would say.

In spite of all that, I continue, but I am devoured by anxiety and doubts. I console myself with the thought that at least I have attempted to do something worth while. That is all.

The standard of the Doctrine will be boldly carried this time, I assure you! But it proves nothing, it says nothing, it is neither historic, nor satirical, nor humorous. On the other hand, is it not stupid?

I have just begun Chapter VIII., after which seven still remain to be written. I shall not finish the work before eighteen months have passed.

It was not a mere bit of politeness on my part when I congratulated you on your work. I love history madly! The dead are far more agreeable to me than the living. Whence comes this seduction of the past? Why have you made me fall in love with the mistresses of Louis XV.? A love like this is, now I think of it, a decided novelty in human emotion. The historic sense dates from yesterday, and it is perhaps the best characteristic of the nineteenth century.

What are you doing now? As for myself, I am deep in Kabbala, in Mischna, in the military tactics of the ancients, etc. (a mass of reading that is of no particular use to me, but which I undertook through the urgency of my conscience, and also a little to amuse myself). I worry myself over the assonances that I find in my prose; my life is as flat as the table upon which I write. The days follow one another, each one appearing to be exactly like the preceding, externally, at least. In my despair, I sometimes dream of travel. Sad remedy!

Both of you seem to me to have the air of stultifying yourselves virtuously in the bosom of your

family, among the delights of the country! I comprehend that sort of thing, having undergone it several times.

Shall you be in Paris from the first of August to the 25th?

While waiting for the joy of seeing you, I clasp your hands with true affection.

TO ERNEST FEYDEAU.

CROISSET, *Sunday, July* 20, 1860.

I REPLY immediately to your pretty letter, received this morning, to congratulate you, my dear sir, on the life you lead! Accept the homage of my envy.

Since you ask me about *Salammbô*, this is how it stands. I have just finished the ninth chapter, and am preparing the material for the tenth and eleventh, which I intend to write this winter, living here all alone, like a bear.

I am occupied now with a quantity of reading, which I get through with great rapidity. For the last three days I have done nothing but swallow Latin, following, at the same time, my studies of the early Christians. As to the Carthaginians, I really believe I have exhausted all texts on the subject. After my romance is finished, it would be easy for me to write a large volume of criticisms of these books, with strong citations. For instance, no longer ago than to-day, a passage in Cicero led me to discover a form of Tanith of which I had had no previous knowledge.

I become wise—and sad! Yes, I now lead a holy existence—I, who was born with so many appetites! But sacred literature has become a part of my very being.

I pass my time in putting stones on the pit of my stomach, to prevent the feeling of hunger! This makes me fairly stupid at times.

As to my "copy" (since that is the term), frankly, I do not know what to think. I fear I may fall into the way of making continual repetitions, of eternally rehashing the same things. Sometimes my phrases seem to be all cut after the same fashion, and likely to bore anyone to death. My will does not weaken, but I find it very difficult to please myself. I feel like *eating* my own words.

You may judge of my agitation just now, when I tell you that I am actually preparing a grand *coup*, the finest effect in the book. It must be at once brutal and chaste, mystical yet realistic,—a kind of effect that never has been produced before, yet absolutely real and convincing.

That which I predicted has come true; you are enamoured of Arabian manners and morals! How much time you will lose, after you return, dreaming, beside the fire, of dark eyes beneath a cloudless sky!

Send me a line as soon as you return to Paris. You said you expected to arrive by the end of the month. That time is now here. We must not let any longer time elapse without seeing each other. Bouilhet's play will have its first performance about the 15th or the 20th of November.

My mother and my niece are well, and thank you for your kind remembrance. As to my niece, I be-

lieve I shall be made a great-uncle next April. I am becoming a veteran, a sheikh, an old man, an idiot!

May you enjoy the last days of your journey and have a good voyage home. I embrace thee!

TO MADEMOISELLE LEROYER DE CHANTEPIE.

CROISSET, *September* 8, 1860.

I RECEIVED on Tuesday morning your letter of the first of September. It saddened me to read the expression of your grief. Besides your private sorrow, you are surrounded by exterior annoyances, as I understand, since you are forced to perceive the ingratitude and selfishness of those who are under obligations to you. I must tell you that such is *always* the case, —a very poor consolation, it is true! But the conviction that rain is wet and that a rattlesnake is dangerous has its share in helping us to support our miseries. Why is this so? But here we attempt to encroach upon the omniscience of God!

Let us try to forget evil, and turn to the sunshine and the good we may find in life. If a malicious person wounds you, try to remember the kindness of some noble heart, and fill your mind with that recollection.

You tell me that you find absolutely no sympathy of ideas. That is one reason why you should live in Paris. One always finds there some person to whom one can talk. You were not made for

provincial life. I am convinced that among other surroundings you would have suffered less. Each soul has its own atmosphere. You must suffer keenly, in the midst of the folly, lies, calumnies, jealousies, and indescribable pettiness which are almost the inevitable accompaniment of *bourgeois* life in small towns. Of course, that sort of thing exists in Paris also, but in another form—less direct and less irritating.

There is still time to form a good resolution. Do not continue to live "on foot" as you have lived heretofore. Tear yourself away! Travel! Do you think you may die on the way? Ah, well, never mind! No, no, believe me when I tell you that you would be better for it, physically and morally. But you need a master, who would order you to go, and force you to it! I know you as well as if I had lived with you twenty years. Is this presumption on my part,—an excessive sympathy that I feel for you?

I assure you that I am very fond of you, and that I wish you to know, if not happiness, at least tranquillity. But it is not possible to enjoy the least serenity with your habit of delving incessantly among the greatest mysteries. You kill both your body and your soul in trying to conciliate two contradictory things: religion and philosophy. The liberalism of your mind revolts against the old rubbish of dogma, and your natural mysticism takes alarm at the extreme consequences whither your reason leads you. Try to confine yourself to science, to pure science; learn to love facts for themselves. Study ideas as naturalists study insects. Such contemplation may be full of tenderness. The breasts of the Muses are full of milk; and that liquid is the beverage of the strong. And—once more—leave the place where your soul

is stifling. Go at once, instantly, as if the house were afire!

Think of me sometimes, and believe always in my sincere affection.

TO EDMOND AND JULES DE GONCOURT.

1861.

You must have found a letter from me at your house in Paris, as I wrote to you the same day I received your book (last Monday), after reading it from one end to the other without hastening.

I was enchanted with it! It has an upspringing power that never flags for an instant. As to the analysis, it is perfect—it fairly dazzles me. In my former letter you will find my impression given immediately after the first reading. I should now be reading it a second time, if my mother had not three ladies under her roof, who are regaling themselves with it! It will certainly appeal to the fair sex, and therefore will be a success—I believe that is the general idea. But I have found opportunities to dip into your *Philomène* here and there, and I know the book perfectly. My opinion is this: You have done that which you wished to do, and have done it with great success.

Do not have any anxiety about it. Your *réligieuse* is not banal, thanks to the explanation at the beginning. That was the danger, but you have avoided it.

But that which lends the book its simplicity has perhaps restricted its breadth a little. Beside Sister

Philoméne I should have wished to see contrasted the generality of *réligieuses,* who scarcely resemble her. And that is the only objection I have to make. It is true that you have not entitled your book: *Morals of a Hospital!* This may be the cause of some criticism.

I cannot find words to tell you how pleased I am with your work. I notice a new effect of realism in it,—the power to describe the natural connection of facts. Your method of doing this is excellent. Perhaps the strongest interest of the work springs from this.

What an imbecile was Levy! But he is very amusing, all the same.

No, there are not too many "horrors" (for my personal taste, there are not even enough!—but that is a question of temperament). You stopped just at the very limit. There are exquisite traits,—the old man who coughs, for instance, and the head surgeon among his pupils, etc. The conclusion is superb—I mean the death of Barnier.

It was necessary, perhaps, for you to make your romance in six volumes, but it must have been a wearisome piece of work. They say it is impossible to please everyone; but I am convinced that your *Sister Philoméne* will have a great success, and shall not be at all surprised at it.

I have said nothing about your style, for it has been a long time since I first congratulated you upon that!

Romaine excites my admiration beyond bounds. "Ah! To touch, as you touched, to cut, as you cut there yourself." Here a true and deep note is sounded.

I am as proud of you as I am displeased with myself. Alas! My good friends, things do not go well.

It seems to me, that *Salammbô* is stupid enough to kill one! There is too much talk of the unsettled conditions of ancient times, always battles, always furious people. One longs for cradling verdure and a milk diet! Berquin would seem delicious after this. In short, I am not contented. I believe my plan is bad, but it is too late to change it, because everything now is fully settled.

What do you intend to do next? How goes *La Jeune Bourgeoise?* Write to me when you have nothing better to do, for I think of you very often

Adieu! A thousand thanks, and a thousand sincere compliments! I embrace you.

TO ERNEST FEYDEAU.

1861.

WHAT a man was old Father Hugo! Heavens! what a poet! I have just devoured his two volumes. I need you! I need Bouilhet! I need some intelligent auditor! I want to bawl three thousand verses as no one else ever has bawled them! Did I say bawl?—I meant *howl!* I do not recognize myself—I do not know what possesses me! Ah! that has done me good!

I have found three superb details which are not at all historic and which are in my *Salammbô*. I must cut them out, else some one would be sure to accuse me of plagiarism. It is the poor that are always charged with stealing!

My work is progressing rather better. I am now engrossed in a battle of elephants, and I assure you

that I kill men off like flies! I pour blood in torrents!

I wished to write you a long letter, my poor old boy, about the annoyances you suffer, which seem to me rather serious, but frankly, it is time I went to bed. It will soon be four o'clock in the morning. Father Hugo has turned my brain topsy-turvy!

I, too, have had for some time annoyances and anxieties that are not slight. But—*Allah Kherim!*

You appear to me to be in good condition. You are right. As your book will not be about Belgium (the scene, I mean), it will have a freer colour and unity. But think seriously after that of your proposed work on the Bourse, of which there is a crying need.

TO MADAME ROGER DES GENETTES.

1861.

A GOOD subject for a romance is one that is embodied in one idea, springing up like a single jet of water. It is the "mother idea," whence come all that follow. One is by no means free to write of such or such a thing; he does not *choose* his subject. This is something that the public and the critics do not comprehend, but the secret of all masterpieces lies in the concordance between the subject and the temperament of the author.

You are right; we must speak with respect of *Lucrece;* I can compare it only to Byron, and Byron had not his gravity, nor his sincerity, nor his sadness. The melancholy of the olden time seems to me more

profound than that of our day, which implies, more or less, the idea of immortality beyond the grave. But to the ancients the grave was infinity; their dreams were conceived and enacted against a black and unchangeable background. No cries, no convulsions, nothing but the fixity of a thoughtful visage! The gods no longer existed, and the Christ had not yet come; and the ancients, from Cicero to Marcus Aurelius, lived at a unique epoch when man alone was all-powerful. I do not find anything like such grandeur as this; but that which renders *Lucrece* intolerable is its philosophy, which the author presents as positive. It is because he does not suspect that it is weak; he wishes to explain, to conclude! If he had resembled Epicurus only in mind and not in system, all parts of his work would have been immortal and radical. No matter! Our modern poets are weak and puny compared with such a man!

TO MADAME ROGER DES GENETTES.

CROISSET, 1862.

To you I can say everything! Well, our god has come down a peg! *Les Misérables* exasperates me, yet one cannot say a word against it, for fear of being thought a *mouchard!* The position of the author is impregnable, unassailable. I, who have passed my life in adoring him, am actually indignant at him at present, and must burst out somehow!

I find in this book neither verity nor grandeur. As to style, it seems to me intentionally incorrect and

low, as if the story had been written thus to flatter the popular taste. Hugo has a good word and kindly attention for everyone: Saint Simonians, Philippists, even for innkeepers,—all receive equal adulation, and the types are like those found only in tragedies. Where are there any prostitutes like Fantine, convicts like Valjean, and politicians like the stupid donkeys of the A, B, C? Nowhere do we find the real suffering of the *soul*. These are only manikins, sugar dolls, beginning with Monseigneur Bienvenu. In a rage of socialism, Hugo calumniates the Church as he calumniates misery.

Where is the bishop who asks a benediction from a convention? Where is the factory that turns away a girl because she has a child? And the digressions! How many of these do we find! The passage about manure should interest Pelletan!

This book was written for the low socialist class and for the philosophical-evangelical vermin. What a pretty character is Monsieur Marius, living for three days on a cutlet, and Monsieur Enjolras, who never had given but two kisses in his life, poor fellow!

As to the conversations, they are good, but they are all alike. The eternal repetitions of Père Gillenormant, the final delirium of Valjean, the humour of Cholomiès and of Gantaise—it is all in the same strain. Always a straining after effects, attempts at jokes, an effort at gaiety, but nothing really comic. There are lengthy explanations of things quite outside the subject, and a lack of details that should be indispensable. Then there are long sermons, saying that universal suffrage would be a very fine thing, and that it is necessary to instruct the masses,—all of which is repeated to satiety.

Decidedly, this book, in spite of some beautiful passages, is childish. Personal observation is a secondary quality in literature, but one should not allow himself to paint society so falsely when he is the contemporary of Balzac and of Dickens. It was a splendid subject, but what calm philosophy it demanded in its treatment, and what breadth of scientific vision! It is true that Father Hugo disdains science,—and he proves it!

In my mind this confirms Descartes or Spinoza.

Posterity will not pardon him for attempting to be a thinker, in spite of his nature. Where has the rage for philosophic prose conducted him? And what kind of philosophy? That of Prudhomme, of the Bonhomme Richard, or of Béranger. He is no more of a thinker than Racine, or La Fontaine, whom he considers mediocre; that is, in this book he flows with the current, even as they; he gathers all the banal ideas of his epoch, and with such persistence that he forgets his work and his art.

This is my opinion; I keep it to myself, you understand. Anyone that handles a pen must feel too much gratitude towards Hugo to permit himself to criticise him; but I find that externally, at least, even the gods grow old!

I await your reply—and your anger!

TO THEOPHILE GAUTIER.

1863.

WHAT a charming article, my dear Théo, and how can I thank you for it? If anyone had said to me,

when I was twenty years old, that Théophile Gautier, with whom my imagination was filled, would write such things about me, I should have become delirious with pride!

Have you read the third philippic of Sainte-Beuve? But your panegyric of Trajan avenges me.

May I expect you the day after to-morrow? Tell Toto to give me an answer regarding this.

Your old friend.

TO THÉOPHILE GAUTIER.

Monday evening, 1863.

My old Théo: Do not come Wednesday. I am invited to dine with the Princess Mathilde that evening, and we should not have time for a chat before dinner. Let us put it off until Saturday. Ducamp has been notified.

My reply to my lord Frœhner will appear in *l'Opinion* next Saturday, or perhaps Thursday. I believe that you will not be displeased with the phrase that alludes to you.

Is it understood, then—Saturday?

TO THÉOPHILE GAUTIER.

Croisset, *April 3,* 1864.

How goes it, dear old master? How comes on the *Fracasse?* What do you think of *Salammbô?* Is

there anything new to say about that young person? The *Figaro-Programme* has mentioned it again, and Verdi is in Paris.

As soon as you have finished your romance, come to my cabin and stay a week (or more) according to your promise, and we will lay out the scenario. I shall expect you in May. Let me know two days in advance before you come.

I am dreaming of writing two books, without having done any actual work upon them. I have nails in my throat — if I may so express myself.

It seems to me a very long time since I have seen your dear face.

I imagine that we shall enjoy here (far from courts and women) a great gossip. So run hither as soon as you are free! I kiss you on both cheeks.

Tenderest remembrances to all, especially to Toto.

I am a victim of the HHHHHATRED OF THE PRIESTS, having been cursed by them in two churches — Sainte-Clotilde and Trinity!! They accuse me of being the inventor of obscene travesties, and of wishing to restore paganism!

TO GEORGE SAND.

1866.

DEAR MADAME: I cannot tell you how much pleased I am that you fulfilled what you called a duty. The kindness of your heart has touched me and your sympathy has made me proud. That is all.

Your letter, which I have just received, adds to your article and even surpasses it, and I do not

know what to say to you unless I say frankly that I love you for it!

It was not I that sent you a little flower in an envelope last September. But it is a strange coincidence that I received at the same time, sent in the same fashion, a leaf plucked from a tree.

As to your cordial invitation, I reply neither yes nor no, like a true Norman. I shall surprise you, perhaps, some day this summer. I have a great desire to see you and to talk with you.

It would be very sweet to me to have your portrait to hang upon my study wall in the country, where I often pass long months entirely alone. Is my request indiscreet? If not, I send you a thousand thanks in advance. Take them in addition to my others, which I reiterate.

TO GEORGE SAND.

PARIS, 1866.

MOST certainly I count upon your visit at my private domicile. As for the inconveniences dreaded by the fair sex, you will not perceive more of them than have others (be sure of that). My little stories of the heart and of the sense do not come out of a back shop. But as it is a long distance from my home to yours, in order to save you a useless journey, let me meet you as soon as you arrive in Paris, and we will dine together all by ourselves with our elbows on the table!

I have sent Bouilhet your kind message.

At the present moment I am deafened by the crowd in the street under my window following the prize ox! And they say that intellect flourishes among the people of the street!

TO GEORGE SAND.

CROISSET, *Tuesday*, 1866.

You are alone and sad where you are, and I am the same here. Whence come the black moods that sometimes sweep over us? They creep up like the rising tide and we are suddenly overwhelmed and must flee. My method is to lie flat on my back and do nothing, and the wave passes after a time.

My romance has been going badly for a quarter of an hour. Then, too, I have just heard of two deaths, that of Cormenin, a friend for the past twenty-five years, and of Gavarni. Other things have troubled me, too, but all this will soon pass over.

You do not know what it is to sit a whole day with your head in your hands, squeezing your unhappy brain in trying to find a word. Your ideas flow freely, incessantly, like a river. But with me they run slowly, like a tiny rill. I must have great works of art to occupy me in order to obtain a cascade. Ah! I know what they are—the terrors of *style!*

In short, I pass my life gnawing my heart and my brain—that is the real truth about your friend.

You ask whether he thinks sometimes of his old troubadour of the clock. He does, indeed! And he

regrets him. Our little nocturnal chats were very charming. There were moments when I had to restrain myself to keep from babbling to you like a big baby.

Your ears must have burned last night. I dined with my brother and his family. We spoke of scarcely anyone but you, and everyone sang your praises, dear and well-beloved master!

I re-read, *à propos* of your last letter (and by a natural train of ideas), Father Montaigne's chapter entitled "Some Verses of Virgil." That which he says about chastity is precisely my own belief.

It is the effort that is difficult, and not abstinence in itself. Otherwise, it would be a curse to the flesh. Heaven knows whither this would lead. So, at the risk of eternal reiteration, and of being like Prudhomme, I repeat that your young man was wrong. If he had been virtuous up to twenty years of age, his action would be an ignoble libertinage at fifty. Everyone gets his deserts some time! Great natures, that are also good, are above all things generous, and do not calculate expense. We must laugh and weep, work, play, and suffer, so that we may feel the divine vibration throughout our being. That, I believe, is the characteristic of true manhood.

TO GEORGE SAND.

CROISSET, *Saturday night,* 1866.

AT LAST I have it, that beautiful, dear, and illustrious face! I shall put it in a large frame and hang it on

my wall, being able to say, as M. de Talleyrand said to Louis Philippe: "It is the greatest honour my house ever has received." Not quite appropriate, for you and I are better than those two worthies!

Of the two portraits, the one I like the better is the drawing by Couture. As to Marchal's conception, he has seen in you only "the good woman"; but I, who am an old romanticist, find in it "the head of the author" who gave me in my youth so many beautiful dreams!

TO GEORGE SAND.

CROISSET, 1866.

I, A MYSTERIOUS being, dear master? What an idea! I find myself a walking platitude, and am sometimes bored to death by the *bourgeois* I carry about under my skin! Sainte-Beuve, between you and me, does not know me at all, whatever he may say. I even swear to you (by the sweet smile of your grand-daughter!) that I know few men less "vicious" than myself. I have dreamed much, but have done little. That which is deceptive to superficial observers is the discord between my sentiments and my ideas. If you wish to have my confession, I will give it frankly.

My sense of the grotesque has always restrained me from yielding to any inclination towards licentiousness. I maintain that cynicism protects chastity. We must discuss this matter at length (that is, if you choose) the next time we meet.

This is the programme that I propose to you. During the next month my house will be in some disorder. But towards the end of October, or at the beginning of November (after the production of Bouilhet's play), I hope nothing will prevent you from returning here with me, not for a day, as you say, but for a week at least. You shall have your room "with a round table and everything needful for writing." Is that agreeable?

About the fairy play [*The Castle of Hearts*] I thank you for your kindly offer of assistance. I will tell you all about the thing (I am writing it in collaboration with Bouilhet). But I believe it is a mere trifle, and I am divided between the desire to gain a few piastres and shame at the idea of exhibiting such a piece of frivolity.

I find you a little severe towards Brittany, but not towards the Bretons themselves, who appear to me a crabbed set of animals.

À propos of Celtic archæology, I published, in *l'Artiste,* in 1858, a marvellous tale about the rocking stones, but I have not a copy of the number, and do not even remember in which month it appeared.

I have read, continuously, the ten volumes of *l'Historie de Ma Vie,* of which I knew about two thirds, in fragments. That which struck me most forcibly was the account of life in the convent.

On all these matters I have stored up a quantity of observations to submit to you when we meet.

TO GEORGE SAND.

CROISSET, *Saturday night,* 1866.

THE sending of the two portraits made me believe that you were in Paris, dear master, and I wrote you a letter which now awaits you at the Rue des Feuillantines.

I have not found my article on the dolmens. But I have the whole manuscript about my trip through Brittany among my unedited works. We shall have it to let our tongues loose upon while you are here. Take courage!

I do not experience, as you do, that feeling as of the beginning of a new life, the bewilderment of a fresh existence newly opening. On the contrary, it seems to me that I have always existed, and I possess recollections that go back to the time of the Pharaohs! I can see myself at various epochs in history very clearly, following various occupations, and placed in divers circumstances. The present individual is the product of my past individualities. I have been a boatman on the Nile; a *leno* at Rome during the time of the Punic wars; then a Greek rhetorician at Suburra, where I was devoured by bugs. I died, during the crusades, from eating grapes on the coast of Syria. I have been a pirate and a monk; a clown and a coachman. Perhaps, also, an emperor in the Orient!

Many things would explain themselves if we could only know our true genealogy. For, the elements that go to make a man being limited, the same combinations must reproduce themselves.

We must regard this matter as we regard many others. Each of us takes hold of it by only one end, and never fully understands it. The psychological sciences remain where they have always lain, in folly and in darkness. All the more so since they possess no exact nomenclature, and we are compelled to employ the same expression to signify the most diverse ideas. When we mix up the categories, good-bye to the *morale!*

Do you not find that, since '89, we struggle with trifles? Instead of continuing along the broad road, which was as wide and beautiful as a triumphal way, we run off into narrow paths, or struggle in the mire. It might be wiser to return temporarily to d'Holbach. Before admiring Prudhon, we should know Turgot!

But "Chic," that modern religion, what would become of that?

"Chic" (or "Chique") opinions: to support Catholicism, without believing a word of it; to approve of slavery; to praise the House of Austria; to wear mourning for Queen Amélie; to admire *Orphée aux Enfers;* to occupy oneself with agriculture; to talk "sport;" to be cold; to be idiot enough to regret the treaties of 1815. All this is the very newest thing!

Ah! You believe because I pass my life in trying to make harmonious phrases and to avoid assonances, that I do not form my own little judgments on the affairs of this world. Alas! I do, and sometimes I boil with rage at not being able to express them.

But enough of gossip, or I shall bore you.

Bouilhet's play will appear early in November. And we shall see each other in about a month from that time.

I embrace you tenderly, dear master!

TO GEORGE SAND.

Monday night, 1866.

You are sad, my poor friend and dear master; I thought of you at once on learning of the death of Duveyrier. Since you loved him, I pity you. This loss is one of many. These deaths we feel in the depths of our hearts. Each of us carries within himself his own burial ground.

I am all *unscrewed* since your departure; it seems to me now as if ten years have passed since last I saw you. My only topic of conversation with my mother is yourself; we all cherish the thought of you here.

Under what constellation were you born, to have united in your person qualities so diverse, so numerous, and so rare? I hardly know how to characterise the sentiment I feel for you, but I bear you a *particular* tenderness, such as I never have felt for anyone else. We understand each other well, do we not? And that is charming!

I regretted you especially last night at ten o'clock. There was a fire on my wood-merchant's premises. The sky was rosy, and the Seine was the colour of gooseberry sirup. I worked at the pumps for three hours, and came home as weak as the Turk of the giraffe.

A journal of Rouen, the *Nouvelliste,* has mentioned your visit at Rouen, and in such terms that on Saturday, after you had gone, I met several worthy *bourgeois* who were indignant at me because I had not exhibited you! The most absurd remark was

made by an old sub-prefect:—"Ah! if we had only known that she was here . . . we should have . . . we should have" . . . pause of five minutes, while he searched for a word—"we should have . . . *smiled!*" That would have been a great compliment, eh?

To love you "more" is difficult, but I embrace you tenderly. Your letter of this morning, so melancholy, has touched the depths of my heart. We are separated just at the time when we wish to say so many things. Not all doors have yet been opened between you and me. You inspire me with a deep respect, and I dare not question you.

TO EDMOND AND JULES DE GONCOURT.

Friday, one o'clock, 1867.

MY DEAR OLD BOYS! On arriving at Paris, the day before yesterday, I learned of your nomination through Scholl's article. So my pleasure was mingled with annoyance.

Then, last evening, the princess told me you were in Paris. If you were in the habit of opening your door to the people that knock at it, I should have presented myself at midnight, to embrace you.

How shall we meet?—for I must return this evening. It is not you, Edmond, I wish to compliment so much as Jules, to whom the nomination must give more pleasure than it gives to you. The fifteenth of next August will be the date for your turn, I suppose.

Adieu, dear old fellows, I embrace you both most tenderly.

I wrote to you at Trouville, *poste restante*. Have you received my letter?

P. S.—A sudden thought seizes me. What do you intend to do this evening? Where shall you be at five minutes before midnight? Is it not possible that I might dine with you? Where shall we see each other?

You know that this is worn as soon as the news is printed in the *Moniteur*. So here is a little gift from your friend. Cut the ribbon and wear it. Cut it in half, because there is enough for two.

TO GEORGE SAND.

Wednesday night, 1867.

I HAVE followed your advice, dear master, and I have taken exercise!

Am I not good, eh?

Sunday evening, at eleven o'clock, there was such beautiful moonlight on the river and across the snow, that I was seized with a wild desire to go out and bestir myself; so I walked for two hours and a half, showing the scenery to myself, and imagining I was travelling in Russia or in Norway! When the waves rose and cracked the ice along the edges of the river, it was, without joking, really superb. Then I thought of you, and longed for your companionship.

I do not like to eat alone. I find it necessary to associate the idea of some one to the things that give

me pleasure. But the right "some one" is extremely rare. I ask myself why I love you. Is it because you are a great "man" or simply a charming being? I do not know. The one thing I am sure of is that I feel for you a particular sentiment which I cannot define.

A propos of this, do you believe (you, who are a master in psychology) that one ever loves two persons in the same way, or that one ever experiences two identical sensations? I do not believe it, as I maintain that the individual changes every moment of his existence.

You write me such pretty things regarding "disinterested affection." They are very true, but the contrary also is true. We always imagine God in our own image. At the foundation of all our loves and all our admirations we find — ourselves, or something resembling ourselves. But what matters it? — if we are admirable!

My own *ego* overwhelms me for a quarter of an hour. How heavily that rascal weighs upon me at times. He writes too slowly, and does not *pose* the least in the world when he complains about his work. What a task! And what devil possessed him to induce him to seek such a subject? You ought to give me a recipe for writing faster; yet you complain of having to seek fortune! You!

I have had a little note from Sainte-Beuve, reassuring me as to his health, but rather sad in tone. He seems to be very sorry not to be able to haunt the woods of Cyprus. He is right, after all, or at least, it seems right to him, which amounts to the same thing. Perhaps I shall resemble him when I reach his age, but somehow, I believe not. As I had not the

same kind of youth, my old age will probably be different.

This reminds me that I have sometimes dreamed of writing a book on Saint Périne. Champfleury has treated this subject very badly. I see nothing whatever in it of a comical nature; I should bring out its painful and lamentable character. I believe that the heart never grows old; there are people in whom it even grows stronger with age. I was drier and harsher at twenty than I am to-day. I have become softened and feminised by wear and tear, while others have hardened and withered, and that almost makes me indignant. I feel that I am becoming a *cow!* A mere nothing stirs my emotions; everything troubles and agitates me and shakes me as a reed is shaken in the north wind.

One word of yours, which I have just recollected, made me wish to re-read *The Fair Maid of Perth.* She was something of a coquette, whatever they say of her. That good fellow had some imagination, decidedly.

Now, adieu. Think of me! I send you my tenderest thoughts.

TO GEORGE SAND.

Wednesday night, 1867.

DEAR MASTER, dear friend of the good God, "let us talk a little of Dozenval," let us growl about Monsieur Thiers! Could there ever be a more triumphant imbecile, a more abject fellow, a meaner *bourgeois!*

No, no words could ever give an idea of the nausea that overcomes me when I contemplate that old pumpkin of a diplomat, fattening his stupidity under the muck of the *bourgeoisie*. Would it be possible to treat with more naïve and more inappropriate unceremoniousness, matters of religion, the people, liberty, the past and the future, national history and natural history, everything? He seems to me as eternal as mediocrity itself! He prostrates me! But the finest thing of all is the spectacle of the brave National Guards, whom he threw out in 1848, now beginning to applaud him! What absolute lunacy! It proves that everything depends upon temperament. Prostitutes—represented in this case by France—are said to have always a weakness for old rascals!

I shall attempt, in the third part of my romance (when I shall have had the reaction following the June days), to insinuate a panegyric about him, *à propos* of his book: *De la Propriété,* and I hope that he will be pleased with me!

What care should one take sometimes, in expressing an opinion on things of this world, not to risk being considered an imbecile later? It is a rude problem. It seems to me that the best way is to describe, with the simplest precision, those things that exasperate one. The dissection itself is a vengeance!

Ah, well! it is not at him alone that I am enraged, nor at the others—it is at our people in general.

However, if we had spent our time in instructing the higher classes on the subject of agriculture; if we had thought more of our stomachs than of our heads, probably we should resemble him!

I have just read the preface of Buchez to his *Histoire parlementaire.* Like other similar publications,

it is full of stupidities, of which we feel the weight to this day.

It is not kind to say I do not think of my "old troubadour;" of what else should I think? Of my little book, perhaps,—but that is more difficult and not nearly so agreeable.

How long do you remain at Cannes? After Cannes, does not one usually return to Paris? I shall be there towards the end of January.

In order that my book may be finished in the spring of 1869, from this time on, I shall not allow myself even a week's holiday. This is the reason why I do not go to Nohant. I am still on the history of the amazons. In order to draw the bow with the best effect, they used to cut off one breast! Was that a good way, after all?

Adieu, dear master; write to me. I embrace thee tenderly!

TO JULES MICHELET.

Wednesday, 1868.

No, MY dear master, I have not received your book, but I have already read it, and am re-reading it. What a mountain is yours! Where will you stop?

I am overwhelmed by this mass of ideas, and amazed at their profundity.

I believe I never have read anything that impressed me more deeply than that part about the baths of Acqui. You bring the Pyrenees and the Alps before

our very eyes. But in your company one is always on the heights!

The weighty romance in which you express an interest (weighty for me, while waiting to see what it will be for others!), will not be finished in less than a whole year. I am full of it now, in the history of '48. My profound conviction is that the clergy has acted amazingly.

The dangers of democratic Catholicism, pointed out by you in the preface to your *Revolution*, are already here. Ah! we are indeed alone. But you remain to us, you!

I clasp your hand warmly, and beg you to believe me yours, with true affection.

TO GEORGE SAND.

CROISSET, *Wednesday evening, Sept.* 9, 1868.

Is THIS handsome conduct, dear master? Two months have passed since you wrote last to your old troubadour! Are you in Paris, Nohant, or where?

They say that *Cadio* is being rehearsed at the Porte Saint-Martin (are you very sorry, you and Chilly?). They say also, that Thuillier will make her reappearance in your play. (I thought she was dying —I mean Thuillier, not your play.) And when will *Cadio* be produced. Are you pleased?

I live absolutely like an oyster. My romance is the rock to which I cling, and I know nothing of what is going on in the world. I do not even read, or rather, I read only the *Lanterne*. Rochefort bores

me, to tell the truth. One must, however, have considerable bravery to dare to say, even timidly, that perhaps he is not the first writer of the century! O *Velches! Velches!* as Monsieur de Voltaire would sigh, or rather, roar!

And Sainte-Beuve—do you see him? I am working furiously. I have just written a description of the forest of Fontainebleau, which has filled me with a desire to hang myself on one of its trees! I was interrupted for three weeks, and had a hard task to put myself in train to work again. I have the peculiarity of a camel—I find it difficult to stop when once I get started, and hard to start after I have been resting. I have worked steadily for a year at a time. After which I loafed definitely, like a *bourgeois*. It was difficult at first, and not at all pleasant. It is time now that I should do something fine, something that shall please me. That which would please me greatly for a quarter of an hour would be to embrace you! When shall I be able to do so? From now until that time, I send you a thousand sweet thoughts.

TO MAXIME DUCAMP.

CROISSET, *July* 23, 1869.

MY GOOD OLD MAX: I feel the need of writing you a long letter. I do not know whether I shall have strength, but I will try.

Since his return to Rouen, after receiving his nomination for the place of librarian (August, 1867), our

poor Bouilhet was convinced that he should leave his bones there. Everyone, including myself, pitied him for his sadness. He did not appear the man he was formerly; he was completely changed, except for his literary intelligence, which remained the same. In short, when I returned to Paris, in June, I found him a lamentable figure. A journey that he made to Paris on account of his *Mademoiselle Aïssé,* because the manager demanded that certain changes be made in the second act, was so difficult for him that he could scarcely drag himself to the theatre.

On visiting him at his house, the last Sunday in June, I found Dr. P—— of Paris, X—— of Rouen, Morel, the alienist, and a good chemist, one of Bouilhet's friends, named Dupré. Bouilhet dared not ask for a consultation with my brother, realising that he was very ill and fearing to hear the truth.

Dr. P—— sent him to Vichy, whence Villemain hastened to despatch him back to Rouen. On debarking at Rouen, he finally summoned my brother. The evil was found to be irreparable, as indeed Villemain had written me.

During these last two weeks my mother has been at Verneuil, at the house of the Mesdames V——, and letters have been delayed three days, so you see what anxiety I have had. I went to see Bouilhet both days that he was here, and observed some amelioration in his condition. His appetite was excellent, as well as his courage, and the tumour on his leg had diminished.

His sisters came from Carny in order to speak to him of religious matters, and were so violent that they really scandalised a worthy canon of the cathedral. Our poor Bouilhet was superb—he sent them pack-

ing! When I left him for the last time, on Saturday, he had a volume of Lamettrie on his night-table, which recalled to my mind my poor friend Alfred Le Poittevin reading Spinoza. No priest was summoned. His anger against his sisters appeared to sustain him until Saturday, and then I departed for Paris, in the hope that he would live a long time.

On Sunday, at five o'clock, he became delirious, and recited aloud the scenario of a drama of the Middle Ages on the Inquisition. He called for me, in order to show it to me, and was very enthusiastic over it. Then a trembling seized him; he murmured, "Adieu! Adieu!" His head sank under Léonie's chin, and he died very quietly. Monday morning my porter awakened me with a telegram that announced the death in the usual terse fashion of a despatch. I was alone; I packed my things, sent the news to you, and went to tell it to Duplan, who was engaged in his business affairs. Then I walked the streets an hour, and it was very hot near the railway station. From Paris to Rouen in a coach filled with people. Opposite me was a damsel that smoked cigarettes, stretched her feet out on the seat and sang.

When I saw once more the towers of Mantes I thought I should go mad, and I believe I was not far from it. Seeing me very pale, the damsel offered me her *eau de Cologne*. It revived me a little, but what a thirst! That of the desert of Sahara was nothing to it. At last I arrived at the Rue de Bihorel; but here I will spare you details.

I never met a better fellow than little Philip; he and that good Léonie took admirable care of Bouilhet. I approved of everything they had done. In order to

reassure Bouilhet, and to persuade him that he was not dangerously ill, Léonie had refused to marry him, and her son encouraged her in this resistance. This marriage was so much the fixed intention of Bouilhet, however, that he had had all the necessary papers drawn. As for the young man, I found that he had behaved in every way like a gentleman.

D'Osmoy and I conducted the ceremonies. A great many persons came to the funeral, two thousand at least; the prefect, the procurer-general, etc.,—all the little dignitaries! Would you believe that even while following his coffin, I realised keenly the grotesqueness of the ceremony? I fancied I could hear him speaking to me; I felt that he was there, at my side, and it seemed as if he and I were following the corpse of some one else! The weather was very hot, threatening a storm. I was covered with perspiration, and the walk to the cemetery finished me. His friend Caudron had chosen the spot for the grave, near that of Flaubert senior. I leaned against a railing to breathe. The coffin stood on the trestles over the grave. The discourses began (there were three!); then I fainted, and my brother and a stranger took me away.

The next day I went to my mother, at Serquigny. Yesterday I went to Rouen, to take charge of Bouilhet's papers; to-day I have read the letters that have been sent to me, and oh! dear Max, it was hard!

In his will he left instructions to Léonie that all his books and papers should be given to Philip, charging the latter to consult with four friends in order to decide what to do with the unedited works: myself, D'Osmoy, you, and Caudron. He left a volume of excellent poems, four plays in prose, and *Mademoiselle*

Atssé. The manager of the Odéon does not like the second act of this play; I do not know what he will do.

It will be necessary for you and D'Osmoy to come here this winter, so that we may decide what shall be published. My head troubles me too much for me to continue now, and besides, what more can I say?

Adieu! I embrace you tenderly. There is only you now, only you! Do you remember when we wrote *Solus ad solum?*

In all the letters I have received I find this phrase: "We must close up our ranks." One gentleman, whom I do not know, has sent his card, with these two words: *Sunt lacrymæ!*

TO EDMOND DE GONCOURT.

Sunday evening, 1870.

How I pity you, my poor friend! Your letter overcame me this morning. Except for the personal confidence you made me (which you may be sure I shall keep), it told me nothing new, or rather, I mean that I had guessed all that you wrote me. I think of you every day and many times a day. The memory of my lost friends leads me fatally to the thought of you! The schedule has been well filled during the past year—your brother, Bouilhet, Sainte-Beuve, and Duplan! My dreams are darkened by the shadows of tombs, among which I walk.

But I dare not complain to you; for your grief must surpass all those one could feel or imagine.

Do you wish me to speak of myself, my dear Edmond? Well, I am engrossed in a work that gives me much pain,—it is the preface to Bouilhet's book. I have glided over the biographical part as much as possible. I shall write more at length after an examination of his works, and still more upon his (or our) literary doctrines.

I have re-read all that he ever wrote. I have run through our old letters. I have found a series of souvenirs, some of which are thirty years old. It is not very cheerful work, as you may imagine! And besides, here at Croisset, I am pursued by his phantom, which I find behind every bush in the garden, on the divan in my study, and even among my garments—in my dressing-gown, which sometimes he used to wear.

I hope to think less about him when this sad work is finished,—in about six weeks. After that I shall try to re-write *Saint Antony,* although my heart is not in it now. You know well that one always writes with the thought of some particular person in view.

The particular person being, for me, no more, my courage fails me.

I live alone here with only my mother, who grows visibly older from day to day. It has become impossible to hold any serious conversation with her, and I have no one to whom I can talk.

I hope to go to Paris in August, and then I shall see you. But where shall you be? Write to me about yourself sometimes, my poor Edmond! No one pities you more than I. I embrace you warmly,

TO GEORGE SAND.

Sunday, June 26, 1870.

SOMEONE forgets her old troubadour, who has just come from the funeral of a friend. Of the seven friends that used to gather at the Magny dinners, only three remain! I am stuffed with coffins, like an old churchyard! I have had enough of it, frankly!

Yet in the midst of all this, I go on working! I finished last night the preface to my poor Bouilhet's book. I intend to see whether some means may not be found to produce a comedy of his in prose. After that I shall take up *Saint Antony* once more.

And you, dear master, what has become of you and yours? My niece is in the Pyrenees, and I live here alone with my mother, who grows more and more deaf, so that my existence is far from lively. I should go to some warmer climate. But to do that I have neither time nor money. So I must erase and re-write, and dig away as hard as possible.

I shall go to Paris early in August. I shall stay here through October, in order to see the performance of *Aïssé*. My absence will be limited to a week at Dieppe about the end of the month. These are my projects.

The funeral of Jules de Goncourt was very sad. Théo was there and shed floods of tears.

TO MADAME REGNIER.

Thursday evening, 7 o'clock, 1871.

DEAR MADAME: I have had to occupy me during the last few weeks

First: the arrangements regarding Bouilhet's tomb;

Second: plans about his monument;

Third: looking after his volume of poems, which has just gone to press;

Fourth: finding an engraver to make his portrait;

Fifth: all my time for two weeks was taken up with *Aïssé,* I shall read it to-morrow to the actors. The rehearsals will begin next Saturday, and the play will be produced about the first of January.

I was obliged to leave Croisset so unexpectedly that my servant and my belongings will not arrive until three days later. A detailed account of the intrigues I have had to demolish would fill a volume.

I have engaged the actors. I have worked myself on the costumes at the Cabinet des Estampes; in short, I have not had a moment's rest for two weeks; and this petty life, so exasperating and so busy, will last at this rate at least two full months.

What a world! I am not surprised that it killed my good Bouilhet! Besides, I have re-written my preface to his books, as it displeased me in its former state.

I beg you, for heaven's sake, to give me a little liberty for the moment, because with the best will in the world, it is impossible for me to do everything at once. I must attend first to the most pressing affairs. Besides, you are wrong to wish to publish *now.*

What good will it do? Where would you find readers?

I do not hide from you the fact that I find rather unjust your amiable reproaches regarding the voyage to Mantes. Why can you not understand that it would be very painful to me to go to Mantes? Every time I pass before the buffet, I turn away my head! Nevertheless, I will keep my promise. But it would be easier for me to go from Paris to Mantes than to stop there in passing. Do not be vexed with me any longer; pity me, rather!

TO GEORGE SAND.

Tuesday, April 16, 1872.

DEAR GOOD MASTER: I ought to have replied at once to your first letter, so sweet and tender. But I was too sad. The physical force to do it failed me.

To-day, at last, I have begun to hear the birds sing and to notice the green leaves. The sunshine no longer irritates me, which is a good sign. If I could only follow my inclination to travel, I should be saved.

Your second letter (that of yesterday) moved me to tears. How good you are! What a kind heart! I have no need of money just at present, thank you. But if I were in need of it, I should certainly ask you for it.

My mother left Croisset to Caroline, on condition that I should retain my apartments there. So until the complete liquidation of the succession, I shall remain here. Before deciding upon the future, I must

know what I shall have to live upon; after that, we shall see.

Shall I have the courage to live absolutely alone in a solitary place? I doubt it. I am growing old. Caroline cannot live here now. She has two places already, and the house at Croisset is expensive to keep up.

I believe that I shall give up my lodgings in Paris. Nothing calls me there any more. All my friends are dead, and the last, my poor Théo, is not likely to be here long. I fear it! Ah, it is hard to make oneself over at fifty years!

I have realised during the last two weeks that my poor good mamma was the being I have loved most! To lose her is like tearing away a part of my own body.

TO THE BARONESS LEPIC.

AT MY HERMITAGE,

September 14 (the month called Boédromion by the Greeks), 1872.

I TAKE up my pen to write to you, and, shutting myself up in the silence of my study, I permit myself, O beautiful lady, to burn at your feet some grains of purest incense!

I say to myself: She has gone to the new Athens with the foster-sons of Mars! Their limbs are covered with brilliant blue, while I wear a rustic coat! Glittering swords dangle at their sides, while I carry only my pens! Plumes ornament their heads, while I have

scarcely any hair! Many cares and much study have ravished from me that crown of youth — that forest which the hand of Time, the destroyer, strips from our brows.

This is the reason why my breast is torn by blackest jealousy, O lovely lady!

But your missive, thank the gods! came to me like a refreshing breeze, like a veritable perfume of dittany.

If I could only have the certainty of seeing you, at no distant time, amid our fields, settled near us! The rigour of the approaching blasts of winter would be softened by your presence.

As to the political outlook, your anxieties are, perhaps, greater than they need be. We must hope that our great national historian will close, for a time, the era of revolutions. May we see the doors of the temple of Janus shut forever! That is the desire of my heart, as a friend of the arts and of innocent gaiety.

Ah, if all men, fleeing the pomp of courts and the agitations of the Forum, would listen to the simple voice of nature, there would be only happiness here below, the dances of shepherds, fond embraces beneath the trees on one side and another — here, there, everywhere! But my ideas run away with me.

Will Madame your mother devote herself always to the occupations of Thalia? Very well! She proposes to face the public in the house of Molière. I comprehend that, but I believe it would be better (in the interest of her dramatic lucubration) if I myself should take this fruit of her muse to the director of that establishment. Then, as soon as I should arrive in the capital, I should make my toilet, call my servant and command him to go and find a coach for me

in the public square; I should enter the vehicle, drive through the streets, arrive at the Théâtre Française, and finish by finding our man. All this would be for me only the affair of a moment!

In declaring myself, Madame, your unworthy slave, I depose PRUD' HOMME.

TO EMILE ZOLA.

CROISSET, near Rouen, *June 3*, 1874.

I HAVE read it — *La Conquête de Plassans* — read it all at one breath, as one swallows a glass of good wine; then I ruminated over it, and now, my dear friend, I can talk sensibly about it. I feared, after the *Ventre de Paris,* that you would bury yourself in the "system" in your resolution. But no! You are a good fellow! And your latest book is a fine, swaggering production!

Perhaps it fails in making prominent any special place, or having a central scene (a thing that never happens in real life), and perhaps also there is a little too much dialogue among the accessory characters. There! in picking you to pieces carefully, these are the only defects I discover. But what power of observation! what depth! what a masterly hand!

That which struck me most forcibly in the general tone of the work was the ferocity of passion underlying the surface of good-fellowship. That is very strong, old friend, very strong and broad, and well sustained.

What a perfect *bourgeois* is Mouret, with his curiosity, his avarice, his resignation, and his flatness!

The Abbé Faujas is sinister and great—a true director! How well he manages the woman, how ably he makes himself her master, first in taking her up through charity, and then in brutalising her!

As to her (Marthe), I cannot express to you how much I admire her, and the art displayed in developing her character, or rather her malady. Her hysteric state and her final avowal are marvellous. How well you describe the breaking-up of the household!

I forgot to mention the Tronches, who are adorable ruffians, and the Abbé Bouvelle, who is exquisite with his fears and his sensibility.

Provincial life, the little gardens, the Paloque family, the Rastoil, and the tennis-parties,—perfect, perfect!

Your treatment of details is excellent, and you use the happiest words and phrases: "The tonsure like a cicatrice;" "I should like it better if he went to see the women;" "Mouret had stuffed the stove," etc.

And the circle of youth—that was a true invention! I have noted many other things on the margins, viz.:

The physical details which Olympe gives regarding her brother; the strawberry; the mother of the abbé ready to become his pander; and her old trunk.

The harshness of the priest, who waves away the handkerchief of his poor sweetheart, because he detects thereon "an odour of woman."

The description of the sacristy, with the name of M. Delangre on the wall—the whole phrase is a jewel.

But that which surpasses everything, that which crowns the whole work, is the end! I know of nothing more powerful than that *dénouement*. Marthe's

visit at her uncle's house, the return of Mouret, and his inspection of the house! One is seized by fear, as in the reading of some fantastic tale, and one arrives at this effect by the tremendous realism, the intensity of truth. The reader feels his head turned, in sympathy with Mouret.

The insensibility of the *bourgeois,* who watches the fire seated in his armchair, is charming, and you wind up with one sublime stroke: the apparition of the *soutane* of the Abbé Serge at the bedside of his dying mother, as a consolation or a chastisement!

There is one bit of chicanery, however. The reader (that has no memory) does not know by instinct what motive prompts M. Rougon and Uncle Macquart to act as they do. Two paragraphs of explanation would have been sufficient.

Never mind! it is what it is, and I thank you for the pleasure it has given me.

Sleep on both ears, now your work is done!

Lay aside for me all the stupid criticisms it draws forth. That kind of document interests me very much.

TO GUY DE MAUPASSANT.

DIEPPE, *July* 28, 1874.

MY DEAR FRIEND: As Saturday is for you a kind of consecrated day, and as I could be in Paris only one day, which was last Saturday, I shall not be able to see you on your return from Helvetia.

Know, then, that *Le Sexe Faible* was enthusiastically received at the Cluny Theatre, and it will be

acted there after Zola's piece, that is, about the last of November.

Winschenk, the director of this little box of a theatre, predicts a great pecuniary success. Amen!

It goes without saying, it is the general opinion that I lower myself in making my appearance in an inferior theatre. But this is the story: Among the artists engaged by Winschenk for my play was Mlle. Alice Regnault. He feared that she would be taken by the Vaudeville Theatre, and that the Vaudeville would not allow her to appear in my play. Will you be kind enough to inform yourself discreetly of the state of the case when you are in Paris?

I shall return to Croisset Friday evening, and Saturday I shall begin *Bouvard et Pécuchet.* I tremble at the prospect, as one would the night before embarking for a voyage around the world!

All the more reason why we should meet and embrace.

TO MAURICE SAND.

CROISSET, *Sunday, June* 24, 1876.

You have forestalled me, my dear Maurice! I wished to write to you, but I waited until you should be a little more free, more alone. I thank you for your kind thought.

Yes, there are few of us left now. And if I do not remain here long, it is because my former friends have drawn me to them.

This has seemed to me like burying my mother a second time. Poor, dear, great woman! What

genius and what a heart! But she lacked nothing; it is not she who calls for pity!

What shall you do now? Shall you remain at Nohant? That dear old house must seem terribly empty to you. But you, at least, are not alone. You have a wife—a rare woman!—and two exquisite children. While I was with you there, I felt above all my sadness, two desires: to run away with Aurore, and to kill Monsieur . . . ! That is the truth: it is useless to try to analyse the psychology of the thing.

I received yesterday a very tender letter from the good Tourgueneff. He, too, loved her! But who did not love her? If you had beheld the grief of Martine in Paris! It was overwhelming.

Plauchut is still at Nohant, I suppose. Tell him I love him after seeing him weep so bitterly.

And let your own tears flow freely, my dear friend! Do not try to console yourself—it would be almost impossible. Some day you will find within yourself a deep and sweet certainty that you were always a good son, and that she knew it well. She spoke of you as a blessing.

And after you shall have joined her once more, and after the great-grandchildren of the grandchildren of your two little daughters also shall have rejoined her, and when for a long time people have ceased to talk of the things and the persons that surround us at present —in some centuries to come—there will still be hearts that will palpitate at her words! People will read her books, will ponder over her thoughts, will love as she loved.

But all that *does not give her back to you!* With what shall we sustain ourselves, then, if pride fails us,

and what man can feel more of that for his mother than yourself?

Now, my dear friend, adieu! When shall we meet again? For I feel an insatiable desire to talk of *her!*

Embrace Madame Maurice for me, as I embraced her on the stairs at Nohant, also your little ones.

Yours, from the depths of my heart.

TO GUY DE MAUPASSANT.

Night of August 28, 1876.

YOUR letter has rejoiced me, young man! But I advise you to moderate yourself, in the interest of literature.

Take care! all depends upon the end one wishes to attain. A man who has accredited himself an artist has no right to live like other men.

All that which you tell me about Catulle Mendès does not surprise me at all. He wrote to me the day before yesterday, to ask me to give him *gratis* the fragments of the *Château des Cœurs,* and also the unedited stories that I had just finished. I replied that it was quite impossible, which is true. Yesterday I wrote him a rather sharp letter, as I was indignant at the article on Renan. It attacked him in the grossest fashion, and there was also some humbug about Berthelot. Have you read it, and what do you think of it? In short, I said to Catulle, first, that I wished him to efface my name from the list of his collaborators; and, second, not to send me his

journal any more! I do not wish to have anything in common with such fellows! It is a very bad set, my dear friend, and I advise you to do as I have done—let them entirely alone. Catulle will probably reply to my letter, but my decision is taken, and that is an end of it. That which I cannot pardon is the base democratic envy.

The tiresome article on Offenbach goes to the extremest limits about his comic spirit. And what stupidity! I mean the joke that was invented by Fiorantino in 1850, and is still alive to-day!

In order to make a triad, add the name of Littré, the gentleman who pretends that we are all descended from apes; and last Friday the butchery of Sainte-Beuve! Oh, the idiocy of it!

As to myself, I am working very hard, seeing no one, reading no journals, and bawling away like a maniac in the seclusion of my study. I pass the whole day, and almost the whole night, bent over my table, and admire the sunrise with great regularity! Before my dinner (about seven o'clock) I splash about in the *bourgeoise* waves of the Seine.—*À propos* of health, you do not appear to me to look very ill. All the better! Think no more about it!

TO GUY DE MAUPASSANT.

Wednesday night, 1880.

MY DEAR FRIEND: I do not know yet what day De Goncourt, Zola, Alphonse Daudet and Charpentier will come here to breakfast and dine, and perhaps to

sleep. They must decide this evening, so that I may know by Friday morning. I think they will come on Monday. If your eye will permit you then, kindly transport your person to the dwelling of one of these rascals, learn when they expect to leave, and come along with them.

Should they all pass Monday night at Croisset, as I have only four beds to offer, you will take that of the *femme de chambre*—who is absent just now.

Commentary: I have conjured up so many alarms and improbabilities regarding your malady, that I should be glad, purely for my own satisfaction, to have you examined by *my* Doctor Fortin, a simple health officer, but a man I consider very able.

Another observation: If you have not the wherewithal to make the journey, I have a superb double louis at your service. To refuse through mere delicacy would be a very stupid thing to do!

A last note: Jules Lemaître, to whom I have promised your protection in regard to Graziani, will present himself at your place. He has talent and is a true littérateur,—a *rara avis,* to whom we must give a cage larger than Havre.

Perhaps he too will come to Croisset on Monday; and as it is my intention to stuff you all, I have invited Doctor Fortin, so then he may extend his services to the sick ones!

The festival would lack much in splendour if my "disciple" were not there. Thy old friend.

P. S.—I received this morning an incomprehensible letter, four pages long, signed Harry Alis. It appears that I have wounded him! How? In any case, I shall ask his pardon. *Vive* the young bloods!

I have re-read *Boule de Suif*, and I maintain that it is a masterpiece. Try to write a dozen stories like that, and you will be a man! The article by Wolff has filled me with joy! O eunuchs!

Madame Brainne has written me that she was enchanted with it. So did Madame Lapierre!

You will remember that you promised me to make some inquiries of D'Aurevilly. He has written this of me: "Can no one persuade M. Flaubert not to write any more?" It might be a good time now to make certain extracts from this gentleman's works. There is need of it!

How about the *Botanique?* How is your health? And how goes the volume of verse?

Sarah Bernhardt seems to me gigantic! And the "fathers of families" petition for the congregations!

Decidedly, this is a farcical epoch!